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ARTIST-BIOGRAPHIES.

ALLSTON.



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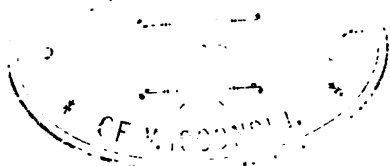
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PREFACE.

WASHINGTON ALLSTON was one of the highest products of American civilization and European culture combined, and possessed the full affluence of literary genius, artistic knowledge, refinement, purity, and religion as few other men of the Western World ever have. He was the intimate friend of Sumner and Irving, Coleridge and Wordsworth, Thorwaldsen and West, Longfellow and Channing, and many others of the foremost men of his age; and on all occasions proved himself worthy of their companionship, and even of their love.

Some materials for this biography were obtained from the memoirs of Leslie, Morse, Collins, Harding, Sumner, and other contemporaries of the artist; and from the writings of Tuckerman, Ware, and Dunlap. I have also examined nearly all the English memoirs and miscellanies relating to the first quarter of the nineteenth century, finding here and there chance allusions or original characterizations of my subject. But a large part of the facts herein set forth have been col-

lected from the friends of Allston; and in this connection I would hereby render my thanks to Mr. Richard H. Dana, Jr., and other members of the Dana family, and also to Messrs. Jonathan Mason, George S. Hildard, Henry W. Longfellow, Robert C. Winthrop, Robert C. Waterston, and other New-England gentlemen who have given me facts about Allston's life. I would also gratefully acknowledge similar assistance from Messrs. Daniel Ravenel and S. P. Ravenel of Charleston, S. C.; the Rev. Benjamin Allston, of Georgetown, S. C.; Captain Joseph Blyth Allston, of Baltimore; and other members of the Allston family.

I have preferred to give as much of the autobiographical character as possible to this sketch, by using Allston's own words on all available occasions, and supplementing them with the language of Morse, Leslie, Collins, Sumner, Irving, Lowell, Felton, and Dana. In this way we may gain a clear and living idea of the great artist and his surroundings, as he appeared to his contemporaries and associates, and may, perchance, comprehend the secret of his fascination.

M. F. SWEETSER.

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ALLSTON.

CHAPTER I.

Waccamaw. — The Allstons. — Childhood of the Master. — Newport. — Channing and Dana. — Harvard College. — Malbone. — Return to South Carolina. — Youth's Joys.

THE district of Waccamaw, in South Carolina, is a long strip of land, between the Waccamaw River and the Ocean, from three to six miles wide, and separated by Winyah Bay, on the south, from the Santée country. On this sequestered and sea-fronting peninsula, a century ago, several patrician families lived under an almost baronial *régime*, with their broad plantations, their many vassals, and their generous hospitalities. Prominent among these were the Allstons, from whom arose one of the foremost of American artists.

It is supposed that the Allstons came from the Norse settlements in Northumberland, and from

a baronet's family. There is a town in that county by the name of Alston, and one in Norway called Alsten. Some people think that the American Allstons were descended from John Allston, who was banished from England about the year 1685, for complicity in the rebellion of the Duke of Monmouth.

William Allston of Brook Green was the nephew of Colonel William Allston, of Marion's staff, who married the daughter of the heroic Rebecca Motte. The younger William had two children, Benjamin and Elizabeth, by his first wife ; and three by his second wife, Mary, WASHINGTON, and William Moore Allston. Benjamin was therefore Washington's half-brother, and his son was Governor R. F. W. Allston, whose son Benjamin, a retired army officer, now resides in the Waccamaw region. Mr. Joseph B. Allston, of Baltimore, and late of the Confederate army, a gentleman famous for his ringing war-poetry, is another grand-nephew of our artist.

Governor Joseph Allston, of South Carolina, who married Theodosia, the daughter of Aaron Burr, was the son of the painter's great-uncle, Colonel William Allston ; and his brother, William

Algernon Allston, married Mary Allston, the sister of Washington. The artist's younger brother, William, studied at Princeton College, and settled in the North, where he married a Miss Rogers, by whom he had three children.

William Allston had several estates in the Waccamaw region, and chose the Springfield plantation as Washington's heritage, while Brook Green was allotted to Benjamin. In the year 1780, before his son Washington had attained his second birthday, William died; and Mrs. Rachel Allston afterwards married Dr. Henry C. Flagg, of Rhode Island, an officer of the Continental army.

We cannot better describe the Allston mansions and their people, a century ago, than in the words of General Horry, one of Marion's partisan officers: "These three spirited charges, having cost us a great deal of rapid marching and fatigue, Marion said he would give us '*a little rest.*' So he led us down into Waccamaw, where he knew we had some excellent friends; among whom were the Hugers and Trapiers, and the Allstons; fine fellows! rich as Jews, and *heart*y as we could wish: indeed, the worthy

Captain, now Colonel, William Allston, was one of Marion's aids. These great people all received us as though we had been their brothers, threw open the gates of their elegant yards for our cavalry, hurried us up their princely steps ; and, notwithstanding our dirt and rags, ushered us into their grand saloons and dining-rooms, where the famous mahogany sideboards were quickly covered with pitchers of old amber-colored brandy, and sugar dishes of *double refined*, with honey, for drams and juleps. Our horses were up to the eyes in corn and sweet-scented fodder ; while, as to ourselves, nothing that air, land, or water could furnish was good enough for us. Fish, flesh, and fowl, all of the *fattest and finest*, and sweetly graced with the smiles of the great ladies, were spread before us as though we had been kings ; while Congress and Washington went round in sparkling bumpers, from old demijohns that had not left the garret for many a year. This was feasting indeed !”

On the Brook Green domain, twenty-two miles above Georgetown, in the mansion-house of his family, Washington Allston was born, on the fifth of November, 1779. The house in which he

came into life has since been destroyed. From his earliest years he was distinguished by a nervous and active temperament, a quick mind, and an acute sensibility, conditions peculiarly unfavorable to his development in the languid atmosphere of the Carolinas, and under the dull routine of a plantation-home.

Allston has thus written of his early years, and of the first manifestations of his genius for composition and landscape, and love for the marvelous and poetic: —

“To go back as far as I can, — I remember that I used to draw before I left Carolina, at six years of age (by the way, no *uncommon* thing), and still earlier, that my favorite amusement, much akin to it, was making little landscapes about the roots of an old tree in the country, — meagre enough, no doubt, — the only particulars of which I can call to mind were a cottage built of sticks, shaded by little trees, which were composed of the small suckers (I think so called), resembling miniature trees, which I gathered in the woods. Another employment was the converting the forked stalks of the wild ferns into little men and women, by winding about them

different colored yarn. These were sometimes presented with pitchers made of the pomegranate flower. These childish fancies were the straws by which, perhaps, an observer might then have guessed which way the current was setting for after life. And yet, after all, this love of imitation may be common to childhood. General imitation certainly is ; but whether adherence to particular kinds may not indicate a permanent propensity, I leave to those who have studied the subject more than I have, to decide.

“But even these delights would sometimes give way to a stronger love for the wild and marvellous. I delighted in being terrified by the tales of witches and hags, which the negroes used to tell me ; and I well remember with what pleasure I recalled these feelings on my return to Carolina, especially on revisiting a gigantic wild grape-vine in the woods, which had been the favorite swing for one of these witches.

“One of my favorite haunts when a child in Carolina was a forest spring, where I used to catch minnows, and, I dare say, with all the callousness of a fisherman ; at this moment I can see that spring, and the pleasant conjurer Mem-

ory has brought again those little creatures before me ; but how unlike to what they were ! They seem to me like the spirits of the woods, which a flash from their little diamond eyes lights up afresh in all their gorgeous garniture of leaves and flowers."

When the boy had reached his seventh year the family physician advised that he should be sent to the North, in order that his nervous and high-strung organization might be recruited by a more bracing air than that of the Carolina lowlands. The education befitting the son of a Southern planter could hardly be obtained on a secluded estate like that of the Allstons, and the desire to place their heir in a situation favorable to his intellectual culture was another reason why his parents resolved to send him away for a few years. In those days there was but one place for a Carolina lad to be educated in, and that was Newport, R. I., whither young Washington was sent.

The excellent schools of Newport afforded facilities for the proper education of the Southern children, many of whom were left here to be prepared for college. John C. Calhoun received

his elementary tuition here, before going to Yale College. James Hamilton was educated here, and afterwards reversed his Northern indoctrination by forcing South Carolina into conflict with the United States, and advocating the Nullification Act, while he was governor. The Kinlocks of Charleston were summer visitors at Newport from 1785 to 1800, and other Carolinians there were the Shubricks, Rutledges, Gists, and Hayneses. The Carolina colony at Newport flourished and increased until it was ruined by the fatal results of the Rutledge-Senter duel.

The connection between Newport and Allston's parish was always peculiarly intimate. An Allston was born in Rhode Island, and appointed thence to West Point in 1820. At the reunion of the Sons of Newport, in 1859, there were seven old Rhode-Islanders present from Georgetown, S. C., the town nearest to the Allston estates.

From 1785 to 1800 Newport was one of the most cultivated and wealthy communities of the United States, the chief naval station of the Republic, and hardly second to New York in commerce. The wealth acquired by maritime

trading had given opportunity for the development of numerous aristocratic families, with whom social life and elegant hospitalities had been refined by the visits of distinguished foreigners and the frequent sojourns of the courtly officers of the French fleets, whose favorite rendezvous during the Revolutionary war had been in this harbor. There was also less of ecclesiastical intolerance here than among the Puritan colonies on the north and west, and a superior ease and freedom of life and manners. The intellectual stimulus which Dean Berkeley had given to the society of the town in 1729-31 had been aided by the foundation of the Redwood Library a few years later, and resulted in a notable degree of scholarship and culture. Dr. Waterhouse of Harvard University stated that the laboratories of Newport were then the best in America. Nor was art so nearly unknown here as in the other small American towns, for Smybert had accompanied Berkeley in his sojourn on these shores, and portrayed several of the Rhode-Islanders. Blackburn had visited Newport on the same errand, as early as 1754; and Cosmo Alexander painted here in 1770. Robert Feke was a skilful local

artist ; Gilbert Stuart obtained his education in Newport, and began to paint here ; and Malbone was a native of the town and a scion of one of its best families. As early as 1730, Henry Collins, a wealthy merchant of this place, had collected a notable gallery of paintings, including portraits which he caused Smybert to paint of Dean Berkeley, Callender, Hitchcock, and Clapp.

The master thus speaks of his boyhood at Newport : " My chief pleasure now was in drawing from prints, — of all kinds of figures, landscape, and animals. But I soon began to make pictures of my own ; at what age, however, I cannot say. The earliest compositions that I remember were the storming of Count Roderick's castle, from a poor (though to me delightful) romance of that day, and the siege of Toulon ; the first in Indian-ink, the other in water-colors. I cannot recall the year in which they were done. To these succeeded many others, which have likewise passed into oblivion. Though I never had any regular instructor in the art (a circumstance, I would here observe, both idle and absurd to boast of), I had much incidental instruc-

tion, which I have always through life been glad to receive from every one in advance of myself. And, I may add, there is no such thing as a self-taught artist, in the ignorant acceptation of the word ; for the greatest genius that ever lived must be indebted to others, if not by direct teaching, at least indirectly through their works. I had, in my school-days, some of this latter kind of instruction from a very worthy and amiable man, a Mr. King, of Newport, who made quadrants and compasses, and occasionally painted portraits. I believe he was originally bred a painter, but obliged, from the rare calls upon his pencil, to call in the aid of another craft. I used at first to make frequent excuses for visiting his shop to look at his pictures, but finding that he always received me kindly, I went at last without any, or rather with the avowed purpose of making him a visit. Sometimes I would take with me a drawing, and was sure to get a kind word of encouragement. It was a pleasant thing to me, some twenty years after this, to remind the old man of these little kindnesses."

This was not the only recompense which Allston made to his generous old friend, for one of

his first oil-paintings was a portrait of Mr. King, bearing a distinct prophecy of the warm and mellow tone and rich coloring of the artist's later works. The face is filled with a pleasing benignity, and the head has a noble and striking contour.

While a boy, Allston was distinguished among his playmates for his quick and almost fiery spirit and for his indomitable courage. An interesting school-boy friendship sprung up between him and a young native of Newport, William Ellery Channing, and lasted for many decades, beautiful and unimpaired. Together these inspired lads rambled through the charming country around the town, and along the resounding shore of the beaches, receiving such impressions of the beautiful and the sublime as had a profound influence upon their after-lives. Fifty years later Allston described Channing as having been a generous and noble-minded boy, his leader and exemplar, though several months younger. Another companion in these walks was Channing's cousin, Richard H. Dana, who was a sensitive and high-strung child, younger than either of the others. The intimacy between

these three was still kept up in the pale winter of their age, when the venerable artist, the saintly divine, and the manly poet were accustomed to visit each other frequently, in their quiet Boston homes.

Of his life at Harvard College he says : —

“ My leisure hours at college were chiefly devoted to the pencil, to the composition equally of figures and landscapes ; I do not remember that I preferred one to the other ; my only guide in the choice was the inclination of the moment. There was an old landscape at the house of a friend in Cambridge (whether Italian or Spanish I know not) that gave me my first hints in color in that branch ; it was of a rich and deep tone, though not by the hand of a master ; the work, perhaps, of a moderate artist, but of one who lived in a *good age*, when he could not help catching some of the good that was abroad. In the coloring of figures, the pictures of Pine, in the Columbian Museum, in Boston, were my first masters. Pine had certainly, as far as I can recollect, considerable merit in color. But I had a higher master in the head of Cardinal Benti-
voglio, from Van Dyck, in the college library,

which I obtained permission to copy one winter vacation. This copy from Van Dyck was by Smybert, an English painter, who came to this country with Dean, afterwards Bishop, Berkeley. At that time it seemed to me perfection ; but when I saw the original some years afterwards, I found I had to alter my notions of perfection. However, I am grateful to Smybert for the instruction he gave me, — his work rather. Deliver me from kicking down even the weakest step of an early ladder." (The same picture by Smybert had previously awakened the first artistic impulses in the soul of John Trumbull, whose skilful pencil afterwards depicted the great events of the Revolutionary era in America.)

"I became acquainted with Malbone but a short time before he quitted Newport, a circumstance which I remember then regretting exceedingly, for I looked up to him with great admiration. Our not meeting earlier was owing, I suppose, to his going to another school, and being some years older than myself. I recollect borrowing some of his pictures on oiled paper to copy. Our intimacy, however, did not begin till I entered college, when I found him established

at Boston. He had then (for the interval was of several years) reached the maturity of his powers, and was deservedly ranked the first miniature-painter in the country. Malbone's merits as an artist are too well known to need setting forth by me: I shall therefore say but a few words on that head. He had the happy talent, among his many excellences, of elevating the character without impairing the likeness: this was remarkable in his male heads; and no woman ever lost any beauty from his hand; nay, the fair would often become still fairer under his pencil. To this he added a grace of execution all his own. My admiration of Malbone induced me at this time (in my Freshman year at college) to try my hand at miniature, but it was without success. I could *make no hand of it*; all my attempts in that line being so far inferior to what I could *then* do in oil, that I became disgusted with my abortive efforts, and gave it up. One of these miniatures, or rather attempts at miniature, was shown me several years after, and I pronounced it '*without promise,*' not knowing it to be my own. I may add, I would have said the same had I known it. I may observe, however (for I know not why I

should not be as just to myself as to another person), that I should not have expressed a similar opinion respecting its contemporaries in oil ; for a landscape with figures on horseback, painted about this time, was afterwards exhibited at Somerset House."

Forty years later he presented Mr. Waterston with a beautiful little sketch which he made in 1798. Three other early sketches, in pencil, now in the possession of Mr. R. H. Dana, represent log-huts and block-houses, and were probably copied from some book on rural architecture. Other drawings of this time are of romantic and tragic scenes, — a scene from Schiller's "Robbers," a castle from "The Mysteries of Udolpho," and that weird picture of a maniac crushing a dove, which Sully so much admired. A vein of contrasted sentiment appeared in the ludicrous caricatures with which he filled the blank leaves of his own and his classmates' text-books.

At this period Harvard had less than two hundred students, and was under the presidency of Dr. Joseph Willard. Massachusetts and Hollis Halls were the chief dormitories, and Harvard Hall contained the chapel, library, and dining-

room. The most prosperous societies were the Institute of 1770, the Speaking Club, and the Phi Beta Kappa, all of which were literary; the Adelphi, a religious union; and the Porcelian and Hasty-Pudding Clubs, devoted to social mysteries and much debating. Allston belonged to the two last named, and one of the record-books of the latter (of which he was secretary) contains a pen-sketch by his hand, depicting a youth seated before a huge caldron, and ladling its contents into his mouth.

Dr. Waterhouse, the professor of medicine, held Allston under his special care while in college, and had a paternal friendship for him. He claims that the youth's first essay in oil-painting was a portrait of his eldest boy, which was in the doctor's possession as late as 1833.

It is said that Allston, before he went abroad, painted four portraits of members of the Channing family, including his firm friend William Ellery. William visited Allston almost daily while they were in college, and the latter once drew for him a quaint group of pyramidal figures, composed of mild caricatures of the professors and tutors, which Channing offered at his recitation on men-

uration. During his Junior year he wrote to Allston, saying, "I have no inclination for either divinity, law, or physic."

A favorite resort of the young Carolinian was the mansion of Judge Francis Dana, the Chief Justice of Massachusetts, and ex-minister to Russia. This house was situated on Dana Hill, between Harvard University and Boston, and was surrounded by wide fields which pertained to the estate, and were afterwards laid out in streets and occupied by a large population. Judge Dana was one of the most hospitable of men, and frequently entertained the chiefs of the Federal party and the leading men of the State. His house was almost a home to many of the students at the college, especially those from the South and the Middle States. Allston was at that time passionately fond of society, and became a very frequent visitor at the Dana mansion.

Among his classmates were Joseph S. Buckminster, afterwards a celebrated Unitarian divine and scholar; Lemuel Shaw, a profound jurist, and Chief Justice of Massachusetts; Charles Lowell, D. D., another liberal theologian, the father of J. R. and R. T. S. Lowell; Joshua Bates, D. D.,

President of Middlebury College; and Timothy Flint, famous for his writings about the Mississippi Valley and the Far West.

Allston's genius for poetry manifested itself during his college years, and won high consideration for the young Southron. Harvard College voted to mourn the death of Washington, in December, 1799, by the following exercises: "An introductory Address in Latin by the President. An Elegiac Poem in English by Washington Allston, a Senior Sophister. A Funeral Oration by Benjamin Marston Watson, a Senior Sophister. A Solemn and Pathetic Discourse by the Hollis Professor of Divinity." Once more he appeared as a poet, on taking his degree.

As soon as his college career was over, Allston hastened south to Charleston, where Malbone had already established himself, and was meeting with great success. Charleston was in those days pre-eminent among the Southern cities in its encouragement of art, chiefly in the line of portraits of the members of the patrician Carolina families. Charles Fraser, a native of the city, painted no fewer than 313 miniatures and 139 landscapes and compositions, illustrating the fair country

around Charleston, as well as the clear-cut features of the Hegers, Pettigrus, and Pinkneys. Sully had settled in the city late in the last century; Waldo of Connecticut was liberally patronized there by the Rutledges; De Veaux excelled in portraits of the planters; Coram was busy in Carolina about 1780; and Earle also practised there, in the manner of Benjamin West.

Allston humorously called his studio at Charleston a "picture-manufactory"; and its chief productions appear to have been a head of Judas Iscariot, and another of St. Peter when he heard the cock crow. The latter, together with some of the youth's college verses, aroused the keen interest of Mr. Bowman, a wealthy Carolinian of Scottish birth, who immediately sought out and generously befriended their author. Bowman was a ripe scholar and an accomplished conversationalist, and delighted to welcome Allston, Malbone, and Fraser to his frequent dinner-parties. In after years his memory was most dear to his *protégé*. About this time Malbone painted a beautiful miniature of the young artist, which is still preserved in Charleston.

The Allston estates at Waccamaw were in the

hands of executors, one of whom offered the young heir a fraction of its real value for his part of the property. The artist's heart was with the æsthetic treasures of Europe, and had no yearning for the patriarchal life of a Carolina planter; and so, fearful of litigation and delays, and unskilled in matters of business, he disposed of his share of the paternal domain at a ruinous sacrifice, and appropriated the proceeds to his support in Europe. Not only that, but so ignorant was he of affairs that he made no attempt to live on the generous interest which might have accrued from the moneys which he received, but deposited his funds with a London banker, and drew directly and freely thereon until they were exhausted.

Certain generous Carolinians, unwilling to have the Waccamaw plantation pass out of the Allston family, offered to advance funds for the youth to make his foreign sojourn with; but he declined these proposals, preferring to keep his independence and to learn to rely on himself. Mr. Bowman insisted on his accepting £ 100 a year from him during the journey and the period of studying; and when this was declined, he proposed to

ship several tierces of rice for him. Refusing even this, and when Bowman would not let him go without a present, Allston accepted Hume's History of England and a novel by Dr. Moore, with a letter of introduction to the latter.

The master himself has thus described his morning years : " With youth, health, the kindest friends, and ever before me buoyant hope, what a time to look back upon ! I cannot but think that the life of an artist, whether painter or poet, depends much on a happy youth ; I do not mean as to outward circumstances, but as to his inward being ; in my own case, at least, I feel the dependence ; for I seldom step into the ideal world without I find myself going back to the age of first impressions. The germs of our best thoughts are certainly often to be found there ; sometimes, indeed (though rarely), we find them in full flower ; and when so, how beautiful seem to us these flowers through an atmosphere of thirty years ! 'Tis in this way that poets and painters keep their minds young. How else could an old man make the page or the canvas palpitate with the hopes, and fears, and joys, the impetuous, impassioned emotions of youthful lovers or reck-

less heroes? There is a period of life when the ocean of time seems to force upon the mind a barrier against itself, forming, as it were, a permanent beach, on which the advancing years successively break, only to be carried back by a returning current to that furthest deep whence they first flowed. Upon this beach the *poetry of life* may be said to have its birth; where the *real* ends and the *ideal* begins. . . .

“Up to this time my favorite subjects, with an occasional comic intermission, were banditti. I well remember one of these, where I thought I had happily succeeded in cutting a throat! The subject of this precious performance was, robbers fighting with each other for the spoils, over the body of a murdered traveller. And clever ruffians I thought them. I did not get rid of this banditti mania until I had been over a year in England. It seems that a fondness for violence is common with young artists. One might suppose that the youthful mind would delight in scenes of an opposite character. Perhaps the reason of the contrary may be found in this: that the natural condition of youth being one incessant excitement, from the continued influx of

novelty, — for all about us must *at one time be new*, — it must needs have something fierce, terrible, or unusual to force it above its wonted tone. But the time must come to every man who lives beyond the middle age, when ‘there is nothing new under the sun.’ His novelties then are the *rifacimenti* of his former life. The gentler emotions are then as early friends who revisit him in dreams, and who, recalling the past, give a grace and beauty, nay, a rapture even, to what in the heyday of youth had seemed to him spiritless and flat. And how beautiful is this law of nature, — perfuming, as it were, our very graves with the unheeded flowers of childhood.”

CHAPTER II.

Studies in London. — West, Fuseli, and Northcote. — With Vanderlyn at Paris. — Switzerland and the Italian Lakes. — Rome. — Thorwaldsen and the Humboldts. — Irving and Coleridge. — “The American Titian.” — Return to America. — Marriage to Miss Channing.

IN May, 1801, Allston embarked for England, in company with his congenial friend Malbone. The latter remained in London five months, studying the pictures there, and executing his exquisite masterpiece, ‘The Hours’ (now in the Providence Athenæum). He then returned to Charleston, and our artist never saw him again.

Soon after Allston’s arrival in London he obtained permission to draw at the Royal Academy, by submitting a drawing from a cast of the Gladiator ; and another sketch won for him the ticket of an entered student. “Mr. West received me with the greatest kindness, — I shall never forget his benevolent smile when he took me by the hand : it is still fresh in my memory, linked with

the last of like kind which accompanied the last shake of his hand, when I took a final leave of him in 1818. His gallery was open to me at all times, and his advice always ready and kindly given. He was a man overflowing with the milk of human kindness." Allston was fascinated by the exquisite taste of Sir Joshua Reynolds's pictures, and expressed his wonder at the slight acquaintance which had existed between Reynolds, Gainsborough, and Wilson, three men who had emerged, with a common purpose, from an age of lead. He thought Fuseli the greatest of living painters (a belief which was afterwards qualified), and was made happy by a courteous welcome to the Swiss artist's studio. He told him that he had journeyed to London in the hope of becoming an historical painter, and was answered, drearily enough, "Then you have come *a great way* to starve, sir." Fuseli had recently exhibited a series of pictures in illustration of Milton, and showed Allston such of the canvases as were not rolled up, being highly pleased with the youth's enthusiastic praises and his free quotations from the great English poet.

The young student began his labors by draw-

ing from plaster casts, at the Royal Academy. The huge paintings of West appear to have exercised no effect upon him, and it was not until after he returned to America that his true inclination appeared. The academic precision learned in London was cold and meaningless to his mind, until the magic wand of the Venetian coloring awakened him to the glory of a higher art.

Bowman's letter to the author of "Zeluco" was never delivered, for the gifted Moore died about the time of Allston's arrival in London. But the high culture and delightful conversation of the young Carolinian secured admission for him to the best literary and artistic circles of the city, and his subsequent reminiscences of metropolitan life were full of interest and attraction. He was also a great favorite among his professional brethren, to whom he was introduced and commended by the venerable West. But his numerous social engagements were not allowed to conflict with his studies, which he practised for more than two years with great assiduity.

About this time, also, Rembrandt Peale. of

Pennsylvania, entered West's studio as a pupil, and was introduced to Allston and Lawrence.

Our artist's habit at this period was to read one or two articles from Pilkington's Dictionary of Painters, as an accompaniment to his breakfast, before entering upon the labors of the day. Many of these were written by Fuseli, whom he regarded as an inspiring and graphic critic, giving clear ideas and a distinct apprehension of the works of many painters with whom he was altogether unfamiliar. Allston has preserved several sparkling anecdotes of Fuseli and his contemporaries, two of which we may give here. Sir William Beechy was criticising a young artist's picture, and said, "Very well, C., very well indeed. You have improved, C. But, C., why did you make the coat and the background of the same color?" "For harmony, sir," replied the youth. "O, no! C., that's not harmony, that's monotony." Again, Fuseli asked the opinion of the Academy porter on one of his new pictures. "Law! Mr. Fuseli, I don't know anything of pictures." "But you know a horse, Sam; you have been in the Guards, you can tell if that is like a horse?" "Yes, sir." "Well?"

"Why, it seems to me, then, Mr. Fuseli, that — that five men could ride on him." "Then you think his back too long?" "A bit, sir."

Allston was also acquainted with Northcote, the crusty old Devonshire painter, and pupil of Sir Joshua Reynolds. He used to tell that he once asked Northcote's opinion as to the merits of William Hamilton, one of the illustrators of Boydell's Shakespeare, and the tart answer was made, "A very silly painter, sir, a very silly painter." Of the pictures of Reynolds, Northcote's master, the young Carolinan thought so highly that he said, "There is a fascination about them which makes it almost *ungrateful* to think of their defects."

So fearless was Allston of his ability that he sent three pictures to the Exhibition of the Royal Academy, — 'A French Soldier telling a Story,' 'A Rocky Coast with Banditti,' and 'A Landscape with Horsemen.' The latter was painted while the artist was at Harvard; and the 'French Soldier' was sold to the European Museum, whose proprietor ordered a companion-picture, 'The Poet's Ordinary.' These two were comic subjects, and were perhaps accompanied

by others of a similar character, for the biographer of Sir Thomas Lawrence makes the following amazing statement: "In mentioning American painters, it would be unpardonable to omit the broad humor, in the style of Hogarth, in the pictures by Mr. Allston." It is to be noticed that Holmes also finds the spirit of Hogarth in some of the artist's earlier sketches.

In November, 1803, Allston and Vanderlyn, the gifted and unfortunate American painter, journeyed from London to the Low Countries, and from thence to Paris. The former remained for several months in the French capital, and painted four pictures, besides copying one of Rubens's works, in the Luxembourg, and Paul Veronese's great composition of "The Marriage at Cana." He said that during his sojourn at Paris he "worked like a mechanic."

Never before nor since was there such a magnificent collection of pictures and statuary as that which dazzled the eyes of Paris at this time, attesting the victories of Napoleon by the choicest art-treasures of the Continent. The Louvre contained the noblest works of Raphael and Titian, from Italy; the masterpieces of Mu-

rillo, stolen from Spain ; and the richest flowerings of Teutonic and Batavian art, which had been torn from the German and Flemish churches and palaces. Through this peerless gallery the poet-painter rambled for weeks, attended by Vanderlyn, a worthy comrade. He wrote thus : " Titian, Tintoret, and Paul Veronese absolutely enchanted me, for they took away all sense of subject. When I stood before the Peter Martyr, the Miracle of the Slave, and the Marriage at Cana, I thought of nothing but of the *gorgeous concert of colors*, or rather of the indefinite forms (I cannot call them sensations) of pleasure with which they filled the imagination. It was the poetry of color which I felt ; procreative in its nature, giving birth to a thousand things which the eye cannot see, and distinct from their cause. I did not, however, stop to analyze my feelings, — perhaps at that time I could not have done it. I was content with my pleasure without seeking the cause. But I now understand it, and *think* I understand *why* so many great colorists, especially Tintoret and Paul Veronese, gave so little heed to the ostensible *stories* of their compositions. In some of them, the Marriage at Cana,

for instance, there is not the slightest clew given by which the spectator can guess at the subject. They addressed themselves, not to the senses merely, as some have supposed, but rather through them to that region (if I may so speak) of the imagination which is supposed to be under the exclusive dominion of music, and which, by similar excitement, they caused to teem with visions that 'lap the soul in Elysium.' In other words, they leave the subject to be made by the spectator, provided he possesses the imaginative faculty,—otherwise they will have little more meaning to him than a calico counterpane."

After the sojourn at Paris (let us borrow the beautiful words of Charles Sumner), "he directed his steps toward Italy, the enchanted ground of literature, history, and art,—strown with richest memorials of the Past,—filled with scenes memorable in the Progress of Man,—teaching by the pages of philosophers and historians,—vocal with the melody of poets,—ringing with the music which St. Cecilia protects,—glowing with the living marble and canvas,—beneath a sky of heavenly purity and brightness,—with the sunsets which Claude has

painted,—parted by the Apennines, early witnesses of the unrecorded Etruscan civilization ; surrounded by the snow-capped Alps, and the blue, classic waters of the Mediterranean Sea. The deluge of war submerging Europe had subsided here, and our artist took up his peaceful abode in Rome, the modern home of Art.”

On his way from Paris to Italy, Allston leisurely traversed Switzerland, and experienced the keenest pleasure from a contemplation of its grand scenery. He crossed the Lake of Lucerne, and then went over the St. Gotthard Pass to Bellinzona and the exquisite lakes of Northern Italy. He says : “ The impressions left by the sublime scenery of Switzerland are still fresh to this day. A new world had been opened to me, — nor have I met with anything like it since. The scenery of the Apennines is quite of a different character. By the by, I was particularly struck in this journey with the truth of Turner’s Swiss scenes, — the poetic truth, — which none before or since have given, with the exception of my friend Brokedon’s magnificent work on the passes of the Alps. I passed a night, and saw the sun rise, on the Lake Maggiore. Such a

sunrise! The giant Alps seemed literally to rise from their purple beds, and, putting on their crowns of gold, to send up a hallelujah almost audible."

Allston left London in November, 1803, and entered Rome in March, 1805, and there is nearly a year of this interval unaccounted for. It was doubtless during this period that he made a long visit to Florence, where he painted the picture which is now in the Boston Athenæum. Some part of the time was probably spent at Venice, in studying the processes of that school of art to which the American master afterwards clung so closely.

Late in 1805 Vanderlyn rejoined Allston in Rome, and these two were the only students from America then in the city. They cast in their lots with an association of youths from Germany, Sweden, and Denmark, who assembled frequently to draw from the living model; and although the two transatlantic students lacked the government patronage and pensions which so greatly aided their European rivals, they had marked success in contending for the honors of their art.

The four years which Allston spent in Italy

were devoted to an earnest study of the old masters, and of that oldest master, Nature, whose fairest works are lavishly displayed in the land of the Apennines, — between *Ætna* and the Alps. The effects of this long communion with such sources of inspiration appeared in his subsequent pictures and writings, and added a new charm to his graceful conversation. He was profoundly moved by the contemplation of the great masterpieces of art at Rome, and enjoyed them in a spirit sufficiently rare among youths of his age, saying, “I had rather see a picture which I could not equal than one which I could surpass.” It was the same sentiment which he expressed, in after years, in the words, “I had rather be the second painter in the world than the first, because I could then have some one to admire and look up to.”

Allston has himself told how he was moved by the masterpieces of ancient art. “It is needless to say how I was affected by Raphael, the greatest master of the affections in our art. In beauty he has often been surpassed, but in grace, — the native grace of character, — in the expression of intellect, and, above all, sanctity, he has no

equal. What particularly struck me in his works was the *genuine* life (if I may so call it) that seemed, without impairing the distinctive character, to pervade them all ; for even his humblest figures have a *something*, either in look, air, or gesture, akin to the *venustas* of his own nature, as if, like living beings under the influence of a master-spirit, they had partaken, in spite of themselves, of a portion of the charm which swayed them. This power of infusing one's *own life*, as it were, into that which is feigned, appears to me the sole prerogative of genius. In a work of art, this is what a man may well call *his own* ; for it cannot be borrowed or imitated. Of Michael Angelo I know not how to speak in adequate terms of reverence. With all his faults (but who is without them?), even Raphael bows before him."

In criticising a painting by Caracci, Allston used the following Dantesque sentences: "The subject was the body of the Virgin borne for interment by four apostles. The figures are colossal ; the tone dark and of tremendous color. It seemed, as I looked at it, as if the ground shook at their tread, and the air were darkened by their grief."

Vanderlyn has told us how he and Allston, Turner and Fenimore Cooper, frequented the famous old Caffè Greco, the resort of the northern barbarians in Rome for so many decades. There, too, were to be seen Thorwaldsen and Cornelius, Andersen and Louis of Bavaria, Flaxman and Gibson, Shelley, Keats, and Byron. Thorwaldsen could hardly have been a student with Allston, as some assert, for he had been in Rome eight years when the latter arrived, and had already won rich pecuniary rewards and the praise of Canova. Nevertheless, he was a friend of the American artist, and often in after years pointed to him as a proof that the loftiest abilities were indigenous to the Western world.

Another group of eminent persons then living in Rome, and accessible to the young Carolinian, was gathered around William von Humboldt, the Prussian ambassador, and Alexander von Humboldt, who had just returned from his travels among the South-American Andes. The Danish envoy, Baron von Schubert, and the Neapolitan envoy, Cardinal Fesch, were also members of the artistic society of the city. Madame de Staël was living there at the same time, with A. W. von Schlegel and Sismondi.

During the period of Allston's sojourn at Rome, the city was continually menaced by the armies of Napoleon, which had occupied several of the Papal provinces. In February, 1808, the French troops entered the gates, disarming the Pontifical guards, and the States of the Church were converted into provinces of the Empire. Pope Pius VII. was imprisoned in the Quirinal Palace, but published thence a bull, excommunicating all who had commanded or were concerned in the invasion of the city. In July of the next year Pius was arrested by French officers and haled away to his prolonged captivity of five years at Savona and Fontainebleau.

The fascination which Allston exercised upon all around him was felt strongly by Washington Irving, who says: "I first became acquainted with Washington Allston early in the spring of 1805. He had just arrived from France, I from Sicily and Naples. I was then not quite twenty-two years of age, — he a little older. There was something to me inexpressibly fascinating in the appearance and manners of Allston. I do not think I have ever been more completely captivated on a first acquaintance. He was of a

light and graceful form, with large blue eyes, and black silken hair, waving and curling round a pale, expressive countenance. Everything about him spoke the man of intellect and refinement. His conversation was copious, animated, and highly graphic ; warmed by a genial sensibility and benevolence, and enlivened at times by a chaste and gentle humor. A young men's intimacy took place immediately between us, and we were much together during my brief sojourn at Rome. He was taking a general view of the place before settling himself down to his professional studies. We visited together some of the finest collections of paintings, and he taught me how to visit them to the most advantage, guiding me always to the masterpieces, and passing by the others without notice. 'Never attempt to enjoy every picture in a great collection,' he would say, 'unless you have a year to bestow upon it. You may as well try to enjoy every dish at a Lord Mayor's feast. Both mind and palate get confounded by a great variety and rapid succession, even of delicacies. The mind can only take in a certain number of images and impressions distinctly ; by multiplying the num-

ber, you weaken each, and render the whole confused and vague. Study the choice pieces in each collection ; look upon none else, and you will afterwards find them hanging up in your memory.'

"He was exquisitely sensitive to the graceful and the beautiful, and took great delight in paintings which excelled in color ; yet he was strongly moved and roused by objects of grandeur. I well recollect the admiration with which he contemplated the sublime statue of Moses by Michael Angelo, and his mute awe and reverence on entering the stupendous pile of St. Peter's. Indeed, the sentiment of veneration, so characteristic of the elevated and poetic mind, was continually manifested by him. His eyes would dilate ; his pale countenance would flush ; he would breathe quick, and almost gasp in expressing his feelings, when excited by any object of grandeur and sublimity.

"We had delightful rambles together about Rome and its environs, one of which came near changing my whole course of life. We had been visiting a stately villa, with its gallery of paintings, its marble halls, its terraced gardens set out

with statues and fountains, and were returning to Rome about sunset. The blandness of the air, the serenity of the sky, the transparent purity of the atmosphere, and that nameless charm which hangs about an Italian landscape, had derived additional effect from being shared with Allston, and pointed out by him with the enthusiasm of an artist. As I listened to him, and gazed upon the landscape, I drew in my mind a contrast between our different pursuits and prospects. He was to reside amid these delightful scenes, surrounded by masterpieces of art, by classic and historic monuments, by men of congenial minds and tastes, engaged like him in the constant study of the sublime and beautiful. I was to return home to the dry study of the law, for which I had no relish, and, as I feared, but little talent.

“Suddenly the thought presented itself, ‘Why might I not remain here, and turn painter?’ I had taken lessons in drawing before leaving America, and had been thought to have some aptness, as I certainly had a strong inclination for it. I mentioned the idea to Allston, and he caught at it with eagerness. Nothing could be more feasible. We would take an apartment to-

gether. He would give me all the instruction and assistance in his power, and was sure I would succeed.

“For two or three days the idea took full possession of my mind ; but I believe it owed its main force to the lovely evening ramble in which I first conceived it, and to the romantic friendship I had formed with Allston. Whenever it recurred to mind, it was always connected with beautiful Italian scenery, palaces, and statues, and fountains, and terraced gardens, and Allston as the companion of my studio. I promised myself a world of enjoyment in his society, and in the society of several artists with whom he had made me acquainted, and pictured forth a scheme of life all tinted with the rainbow-hues of youthful promise.

“My lot in life, however, was differently cast. Doubts and fears gradually clouded over my prospect ; the rainbow-tints faded away ; I began to apprehend a sterile reality ; so I gave up the transient but delightful prospect of remaining in Rome with Allston and turning painter.”

The poet-painter says of another friend : “To no other man whom I have known do I owe so

much *intellectually* as to Mr. Coleridge, with whom I became acquainted in Rome, and who has honored me with his friendship for more than five-and-twenty years. He used to call Rome the *silent* city ; but I never could think of it as such, while with him ; for, meet him when or where I would, the fountain of his mind was never dry, but, like the far-reaching aqueducts that once supplied this mistress of the world, its living stream seemed specially to flow for every classic ruin over which we wandered. And when I recall some of our walks under the pines of the Villa Borghese, I am almost tempted to dream that I had once listened to Plato in the groves of the Academy. It was there he taught me this golden rule : *never to judge of any work of art by its defects* ; a rule as wise as benevolent ; and one that while it has spared me much pain, has widened my sphere of pleasure."

Allston studied not only drawing and painting, but also modelling in clay, to which he devoted much time. He always kept up the practice of modelling, and recommended it to young painters as one of the best means of acquiring an accurate knowledge of the joints. In the study of

anatomy he labored unremittingly, considering the relations of bones, joints, and muscles, and bestowing prolonged attention on the structure and peculiarities of the external human skin. He also gave himself eagerly to the study and analysis of the methods employed by the old masters in coloring.

His magical coloring attracted much attention, even in Rome. Twenty years later, when Weir was studying his profession in that city, the Italian artists asked after a countryman of his, for whom they had no other name than the *American Titian*. When Weir spoke the name of Allston, in calling the roll of American artists, they exclaimed, "That's the man!" This wonderful wealth of color was ever the grand distinction of the master, and was imbued with depth and richness and divine harmony. He made no secret of his processes and materials, but those who sought to avail themselves thereof found that they lacked the fine inner sense of color. His marvellous carnations were never even imitated. He was altogether dependent on his mastery of colors in simple landscapes and ideal female heads, where the charms of

design and incident were absent, yet the sense of beauty is fully satisfied by the richness of the hues.

William Ware says: "When, after a careful study of very many of the best instances of Titian's pencil, I returned, and, with that experience fresh in my mind, again re-examined the best works of Allston, I felt that, in the great Venetian, I had found nothing more true, nothing more beautiful, nothing more perfect, than I had already seen in Allston." An able critic, in Bunsen's great work on Rome, avers that Allston's colors came nearer Titian's than those of any other modern artist. Sandby, the historian of the Royal Academy, says that "Allston was famous in Rome for rich color . . . obtained by an extensive use of asphaltum, after the manner of Rembrandt."

In 1805 the young art-student painted a portrait of himself, which he gave to his friend Mrs. N. Amory, of Newport. In this early work the connoisseur cannot fail to see intimations of the grace, vigor, and minute finish of the artist's later pictures, while the uncritical observer is charmed with the youthful sweetness of the face.

Two other small pictures which he painted at Rome were 'David playing the Harp before Saul' and 'The Romans and the Serpent of Epidaurus.'

In 1809 Allston returned to America, and remained in Boston for nearly two years, when he married the lady to whom he had long been engaged. She was Miss Ann Channing, the daughter of William Channing, a prominent lawyer of Newport, and granddaughter of William Ellery, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. She was thirty-one years old when Allston married her.

In a letter to Mr. Ellery, William Ellery Channing said: "A few hours ago Washington and Ann, after their long and patient courtship, were united in marriage. . . . Your granddaughter has found, I believe, an excellent husband, one who from principle and affection will make her happiness his constant object. I hope that she will settle at no great distance from us ; but we have not yet sufficient taste for the arts to give Mr. Allston the encouragement he deserves."

During this sojourn at Boston the master wrote some of the poems which were afterwards

published in "The Sylphs of the Seasons." They were read, in manuscript, by many of his personal friends, and called forth high praise. In 1811 he also read a poem before the Phi Beta Kappa of Harvard College. During this visit to America Allston received several visits from his old friend Irving, who was now getting fairly to work in literature.

About this time S. F. B. Morse, the son of Jedediah Morse, the celebrated geographer, graduated from Yale College, and went home to his father's parsonage at Charlestown, Mass. Ever since the fourth year of his age he had drawn and painted, unaided by instruction, and now he determined to adopt art as a profession. Allston, ever ready and even anxious to help young men in whom he saw the divine light of genius, sought him out and directed his first studies, awakening in his mind a loving reverence which time never changed.

It is said that Allston paid some attention to portrait-painting after his return to America, charging higher prices than Stuart, who received \$ 150 for a kit-cat picture (28 by 36 inches) and \$ 100 for a bust. He was once asked if he

did n't find the need of rest, and answered, "No, I only require a change. After I paint a portrait I paint a landscape, and then a portrait again." His studio was in the premises on Court Street, between Brattle Street and Cornhill, where Smybert, Dean Berkeley's Scottish *protégé*, had painted eighty years before. Here Allston made portraits of several local celebrities.

Benjamin West once told Walter Channing that "Allston should never have left London. His course here was plain, — his success certain. Here was the proper ground for his labor. He should never have gone to America, — or if he went, it should only have been on a visit. Never should he have married. He was already married, — married to the Art. He should have married no other."

CHAPTER III.

Return to London. — Collins, Leslie, and Morse. — Sir George Beaumont. — West. — Coleridge and Southey. — Death of Mrs. Allston. — Paris. — Lord Egremont. — Irving. — Homeward Bound.

IN the year 1811 the master once more turned his steps toward London, to refresh himself at the springs of the Royal Academy, and to feel again the stimulus of a healthy rivalry. Mrs. Allston was the companion of his journey and the joy of his new home. The good ship *Lydia* sailed from New York in July, 1811, bearing the Allstons and Morse, with eleven other passengers. After a voyage of twenty-six days the vessel reached Liverpool, and the Boston trio established themselves at the Liverpool-Arms Hotel. But they were hurried from the city by the Mayor's orders, since hostilities were then impending between Great Britain and the United States, and all Americans were regarded with suspicion. They set off for London in a post-

chaise, and made the journey of two hundred miles in a week, although Mrs. Allston was in very poor health. The master immediately renewed his former friendship with West, to whom he introduced young Morse ; and settled in lodgings at 49 London Street, visiting his young *protégé* every day, to talk and smoke a cigar with him. Soon afterwards Charles R. Leslie came across the ocean to begin those careful studies, by which he became one of the most famous historical painters of England.

Leslie speaks thus of the time when he and Morse were at London, in 1811: "Our Mentors were Allston and King ; nor could we have been better provided : Allston, a most amiable and polished gentleman and a painter of the purest taste ; and King, warm-hearted, sincere, sensible, prudent, and the strictest of economists." Leslie, then seventeen years old, was bitterly homesick for Philadelphia, and found it possible to be unhappy even in London, where in later years he attained such proud honors. Morse was a year or two older, and labored diligently in acquiring the art which his subsequent invention of the electric telegraph rendered him independent of.

The two youths lived together, in dreary rooms near Fitzroy Square, and visited Mrs. Siddons's performances and copied the Elgin Marbles in company. West and Allston were their instructors and advisers, permitting them to see all their pictures in various stages of progress, and helping them in many ways. Leslie says that "it was Allston who first awakened what little sensibility I may possess to the beauties of color. He first directed my attention to the Venetian school, particularly to the works of Paul Veronese, and taught me to see, through the accumulated dirt of ages, the exquisite charm that lay beneath. Yet for a long time I took the merit of the Venetians on trust, and, if left to myself, should have preferred works which I now feel to be comparatively worthless. I remember when the picture of 'The Ages,' by Titian, was first pointed out to me by Allston as an exquisite work, I thought he was laughing at me."

Allston was a severe teacher and an unflinching critic, as Morse shows in one of his letters home, saying: "Mr. Allston is our most intimate friend and companion. I can't feel too grateful

to him for his attentions to me ; he calls every day, and superintends all that we are doing. When I am at a stand and perplexed in some parts of the picture, he puts me right, and encourages me to proceed, by praising those parts which he thinks good ; but he is faithful, and always tells me when anything is bad. It is mortifying, sometimes, when I have been painting all day very hard, and begin to be pleased with what I have done, and on showing it to Mr. Allston, with the expectation of praise, and not only of praise, but a score of ‘excellents, well-dones, and admirables,’ — I say, it is mortifying to hear him, after a long silence, say: ‘Very bad, sir ; that is not flesh, it is mud, sir ; it is painted with brick-dust and clay.’ I have felt, sometimes, ready to dash my palette-knife through it, and to feel at the moment quite angry with him ; but a little reflection restores me. I see that Mr. Allston is not a *flatterer*, but a *friend*, and that, really to improve, I must see my *faults*. What he says after this always puts me in good humor again. He tells me to *put a few flesh-tints here, a few gray ones there, and to clear up such and such a part, by such and such colors ;* and

not only that, but takes the palette and brushes, and shows me how. In this way he assists me ; I think it one of the greatest blessings that I am under his eyes. I don't know how many errors I might have fallen into if it had not been for his attentions."

Early in 1866 Professor Morse bought Leslie's portrait of Allston, and presented it to the National Academy of Design, saying: "There are associations in my mind with those two eminent and beloved names which appeal too strongly to me to be resisted. . . . Allston was more than any other person my master in art. Leslie was my life-long cherished friend and fellow-pupil, whom I loved as a brother. We all lived together for years in the closest intimacy and in the same house."

In the little coterie of which Allston was the head were found Charles B. King, the Rhode-Island artist ; Leslie and Morse ; Collard, the merry musician ; and Lonsdale, a mediocre portrait-painter who made excellent company. Frequent were the evening parties at their houses, when they assembled for social pleasures and conversation. Leslie wrote to his sister that

"Mr. and Mrs. Allston are the only friends we have left that are very near us, and if I were to lose the society of Mr. Allston I should not wish to remain any longer in England." John Trumbull, the American historical painter, was then occupying a diplomatic post, and Allston said of him: "Among the many persons from whom I received attentions, during my residence in London, I must not omit Colonel Trumbull, who always treated me with the utmost courtesy."

In 1811 Leslie introduced Allston to William Collins, who was afterwards a Royal Academician, famous for his landscapes, marines, and *genre* pictures of rustic English children. The American artist became very intimate with the Collins family, and their friendship was kept up to the end of life. In the biography of William Collins, written by his illustrious son, Wilkie Collins, many of his most important mental acquisitions are referred to the effects of his intimacy with Allston and Coleridge. The great novelist thus characterizes the Carolinian artist: "To a profound and reflective intellect he united an almost feminine delicacy of taste and

tenderness of heart, which gave a peculiar charm to his conversation, and an unusual eloquence to his opinions. . . . Mr. Collins owed to his short personal intercourse with this valued companion, not only much delightful communication on the Art, but the explanation of many religious difficulties under which his mind then labored, and the firm settlement of those religious principles which were afterwards so apparent in every action of his life."

About this time Sir George Beaumont, a friend of Sir Joshua Reynolds and an accomplished connoisseur, wrote a very complimentary letter to Allston, having seen the sketch of his great picture of 'The Dead Man Revived.' He requested the artist to paint another composition for the new church at Ashby de la Zouch, for which he offered him £ 200. 'The Angel Delivering St. Peter from Prison' was the result of this commission, to which the artist devoted six months ; and was much admired by the noble patron. At a later day, however, it was replaced by a stained window, and remanded to one of the garrets of Beaumont's mansion, whence it was rescued by Dr. Hooper, an American ad-

mirer of its author, and removed to Boston, and subsequently to the chapel of the Massachusetts Insane Asylum, at Worcester. The figures in this composition are larger than life, and the head of the angel is a portrait of Mrs. Allston. The highly finished study for the head of St. Peter was exhibited in Boston in 1837.

Allston said: "Among my English friends it is no disparagement to place at their head Sir George Beaumont. It is pleasant to think of my obligations to such a man, *a gentleman in his very nature*. Gentle, brilliant, generous, — I was going to attempt his character, but I will not; it was so peculiar and finely textured that I know but one man who could draw it, and that's Coleridge, who knew him well, — to know whom was to honor."

Sir George was favored by the intimate friendship of Wordsworth, who first advised him to visit Allston, giving as a reason that Coleridge said that his picture of 'Cupid and Psyche' had not been surpassed in its coloring since the days of Titian. In 1815 Beaumont asked B. R. Haydon, Landseer's master, to go to Allston's studio and see the 'St. Peter.' Haydon com-

mended Allston for having abandoned portraiture, and said that "next to knowing what one *can* do, the best acquisition for an artist is to know what he *can't*."

Early in 1813 Mr. and Mrs. Allston, with Leslie and Morse, enjoyed a pleasant trip to Hampton Court, where they doubtless studied the ancient pictures. At this time the brilliant young American actor and dramatist, John Howard Payne, was playing at the Drury-Lane Theatre with great success. He was a frequent and welcome guest of the Allstons, who had known him and his family very well in America. In the beautiful spring season Leslie, Morse, and the Allstons made a pleasant journey of ten days to Windsor, Oxford, and Blenheim Palace, enjoying uncommonly fine weather.

In 1813 Morse wrote the following appreciative sentences about his noble teacher: "I cannot close this letter without telling you how much I am indebted to that excellent man Mr. Allston; he is extremely partial to me, and has often told me that he is proud of calling me his pupil; he visits me every evening, and our conversation is generally upon the inexhaustible

subject of our *divine* art, and upon *home*, which is next in our thoughts. I know not in what words to speak of Mr. Allston. I can truly say I do not know the slightest imperfection in him; he is amiable, affectionate, learned, possessed of the greatest powers of mind and genius, modest, unassuming, and, above all, a *religious* man. You may perhaps suppose that my partiality for him blinds me to his faults; but no man could conceal, on so long an acquaintance, every little foible from one constantly in his company; and, during the whole of my acquaintance with Mr. Allston, I never heard him speak a peevish word, or utter a single inconsiderate sentence; he is a man of whom I cannot speak sufficiently, and my love for him I can only compare to that love which ought to subsist between brothers. He is a man for whose genius I have the highest veneration, for whose principles I have the greatest respect, and for whose amiable properties I have an increasing love. . . . You must recollect, when you tell friends that I am studying in England, that I am a pupil of Mr. Allston, and not Mr. West; they will not long ask you who Mr. Allston is; he will very soon astonish the

world. It is said by the greatest connoisseurs in England, who have seen some of Mr. Allston's works, that he is destined to revive the art of painting in all its splendor, and that no age ever boasted of so great a genius. It might be deemed invidious were I to make public another opinion of the first men in this country: it is, that Mr. Allston will almost as far surpass Mr. West as Mr. West has other artists, and this is saying a great deal, considering the very high standing which Mr. West enjoys at present."

During his abode in England Allston conformed to the custom of the country in regard to late dinners, finding it favorable also to his undisturbed studies. He dispensed with a mid-day meal, and worked incessantly, often amid great mental excitement, until his health was shattered by these unwonted fasts and toils. A serious and chronic derangement of the digestive organs ensued, from which he never wholly recovered; and his pure and enthusiastic spirit was henceforth chained to an inadequate physical constitution. His susceptible and highly nervous temperament was from this time hampered by material troubles, compelling him to long and

frequent cessations from labor, and resulting in occasional inequalities of execution. But the rest given to the pencil was attended with an increased activity of the mind, while new themes for illumination were earnestly pondered, and new writings were prepared.

Allston's health became so seriously affected by his unremitting labors, that, after several months of great suffering, he was obliged to seek a revival by a change of air. He had an uncle living as the American Consul at Bristol, the city of Coleridge, Southey, Chatterton, Sydney Smith, and Robert Hall; and he hastened towards the adjacent watering-place of Clifton, in the hope that the medicinal waters might aid in his recovery. But when he reached Salt Hill, twenty-two miles from London, the malady grew so violent that he was unable to proceed farther, and was confined to a sick-bed for many days, tenderly cared for by his devoted wife. Morse and Leslie attended him in the journey, and the former hastened back to London, and brought Coleridge thence to Salt Hill. Leslie narrates how he occupied the same bed with the great poet, who spent the hours, when he dared to leave All-

ston's room, in a fascinated perusal of "Knickerbocker's History of New York." Once he left the sick-chamber at midnight, and took up "Knickerbocker's History of New York" ("only an American book"), and was found at ten o'clock the next forenoon still buried in its pages, with lights burning and shutters closed, unaware of the lapse of time. Coleridge discharged the utmost duties of friendship in a manner which was surprising in a person of such constitutional indolence, and thus manifested how ardent was his love for his artist-friend. As soon as Allston was able to be moved they carried him to Clifton, the picturesque and far-viewing western suburb of Brighton, whither Coleridge soon followed him. King, the eminent surgeon, Miss Edgeworth's brother-in law, was then at Clifton; and Coleridge had induced Southey to write to him about the artist's case. His ministrations were so effectual that Allston ever afterwards attributed his escape from death to him (under Providence). But the process of recovery was slow and gradual, and the artist was subjected to great annoyance from his uncle, Vanderhorst, a kind-hearted and generous man, but gouty and crotchety, and filled

with an inveterate animosity against doctors, "Don't let one of those rascals enter your door," he cried. "Follow my advice ; live well, and trust to the air of Clifton. You see how well I am and how healthy all my family are, and this is because we never let a doctor come near us." Vanderhorst or some member of his family called frequently on their suffering kinsman, and Dr. King came twice daily, so that Leslie and Coleridge were forced to watch unceasingly lest the eccentric uncle should meet and assail the surgeon. King's visits were kept secret, and Vanderhorst took the whole credit of his nephew's recovery.

Probably no small part of the artist's improvement in health was due to the inspiration of the beautiful scenery of Clifton and the lower Avon River, beheld in the company of the cultured and sensitive Coleridge and Southey. While enjoying such society, amid these charming surroundings, Allston solaced the long weeks of his convalescence by composing several poems, which were published in London soon afterwards, in a duodecimo volume, entitled "The Sylphs of the Seasons." This volume was republished in Boston, in 1813, under the care of Professor Wil-

lard and Mr. Edmund T. Dana. An English author says that Allston also published in London a volume of "Hints to Young Practitioners in the Study of Landscape Painting." Nagler and Blanc both speak of this now forgotten book.

As soon as Allston had passed from under the stress of disease, though still an invalid, he returned to London, and finished the picture of 'The Dead Man Revived by Elisha's Bones.' This great work was exhibited at the British Institution in 1814, where it obtained the first prize of two hundred guineas; and was afterwards purchased by the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts for \$3,500. The master wrote to the friend who had managed the sale: "As necessary and acceptable as the money is to me, I assure you I think more of the honor conferred by the Academy becoming purchasers of my work." The composition is founded on 2 Judges xiii. 20-21: "And the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year. And it came to pass as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men, and they cast the man into the sepulchre

of Elisha ; and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived."

While the master was working on 'The Dead Man Revived' he devoted four months to the painting of a landscape, which he afterwards sent to Philadelphia, to be sold for two hundred guineas. He also painted a 'Mother and Child,' which was at first intended to represent the Madonna, but, failing to reach the artist's ideal, received a less pretentious title. He thought this one of his best pictures, and presented it to his friend McMurtrie, of Philadelphia. This gentleman also had some correspondence with Allston about a picture of 'Christ Healing in the Temple,' which the artist had designed and partly executed, but desisted from when convinced of the inadequacy of the composition. He wrote: "I may here observe that the universal failure of all painters, ancient and modern, in their attempts to give even a tolerable idea of the Saviour, has now determined me never to attempt it. Besides, I think His character too holy and sacred to be attempted by the pencil." Again, he said, when asked why he had not painted Christ: "I have not done so,

because of my convictions concerning the nature, the mission, and the character of the Saviour. These exalt Him so far beyond such an apprehension as could alone enable me to communicate any idea of Him I may strive to reach, that I should fail if I attempted it. I could not make Him a study for art."

During this year, 1814, Leslie introduced Allston to John Martin, "the painter of architectural dreams," whose works were filled with poetic fascination, terrible and brilliant weirdness, and startling imagination. The American had strongly desired to know Martin, ever since he had seen his picture of 'Sadak Seeking the Waters of Oblivion.' Says Martin: "Thus, twenty years ago, commenced a friendship which caused me deeply to regret Allston's departure for his native country; for I have rarely met a man whose cultivated and refined taste, combined with a mild yet enthusiastic temper and honorable mind, more excited my admiration and esteem."

When the master was painting 'The Dead Man Revived,' he was visited by West, who exclaimed, "Why, sir, this reminds me of the

fifteenth century ; you have been studying in the highest school of art. There are eyes in this country that will be able to see so much excellence." He also noticed a head which Allston had modelled in clay for one of his figures, and, taking it for an antique, asked whose it was. Upon finding by whom it had been modelled, he carefully examined it, and expressed his opinion that no sculptor in England could do as well. Leslie says : " I never was more delighted in my life than when I heard this praise coming from Mr. West, and so perfectly agreeing with my own opinion of Allston. He has been in high spirits ever since, and his picture has advanced amazingly rapid for these two or three days."

West was delighted with Allston's 'Diana,' which was exhibited at the British Gallery in 1814, and said to his son, "There, there, why, there is nobody who does anything like that." Young West answered, "It looks like a bit of Titian." "O, yes," exclaimed the venerable artist, "that's Titian's flesh, that's Titian's flesh." He commended the landscape, composition, drawing, and coloring ; and advised his gifted compatriot to follow it with others of similar

small size and delicate finish. About this same time Allston painted the head of West, for the portrait which is now in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Inness says: "How real seems that portrait alongside of Stuart's pink fancy of Washington! and what a piece of bosh, by contrast, is the 'Portrait of Benjamin West, Esq.' (I believe he was n't 'Sir'd'), 'President of the Royal Academy,' by Sir Thomas Lawrence."

In the autumn of 1814 Allston dwelt at Bristol, and was busily engaged in portrait-painting, meeting with indifferent success. Leslie wrote deploring the absence of the master's family and Morse from London, and saying that it made him feel "as I used to when away from my mother and sisters." Allston's uncle was the only purchaser of his pictures, so that Morse said that he might have starved for all the Bristol people did to help him. But among the few portraits which he had executed he ranked those of Coleridge and Dr. King, painted at this time, as the best. Wordsworth said of the former, "It is the only likeness that ever gave me any pleasure." It was painted for Mr. Josiah Wade, and is now in the British National Portrait Gallery. Allston

himself wrote: "So far as I can judge of my own production, the likeness is a true one, but it is Coleridge in repose; and, though not unstirred by the perpetual ground-swell of his ever-working intellect, and shadowing forth something of the deep philosopher, it is not Coleridge in his highest mood, the poetic state. When in that state, no face I ever saw was like to his; it seemed almost spirit made visible, without a shadow of the visible upon it. Could I then have fixed it upon canvas! But it was beyond the reach of my art."

It is said that at this same period Allston painted a portrait of Robert Southey, another of the great lake poets. He also executed two or three fancy compositions, but no trace of them can now be found. Another portrait of this period represented Mrs. King, the surgeon's wife, who was of the Edgeworth family, so famous in the literature of that day.

Southey developed a warm intimacy with Allston, and frequently conversed with him about artistic and literary subjects. "Have you many old books in your country?" said he, one day. "If not, I could not live there." He told Collins

that some of Allston's poems were among "the finest productions of modern times." Coleridge once said to Thomas Campbell that our master had "poetic and artistic genius unsurpassed by any man of his age." He also called him "the first genius produced by the Western world."

Allston's poem, "America to Great Britain," which Charles Sumner calls "one of the choicest lyrics in the language," received the honor of being incorporated by Coleridge in his volume of "Sibylline Leaves," which was published in 1817. Our own Longfellow now possesses the author's copy of this book, enriched by numerous marginal notes in the handwriting of the great lake poet, among which we find, alongside of the "America to Great Britain," the following sentence, in Coleridge's delicate chirography: "By Washington Allston, a painter born to renew the fifteenth century." Coleridge was very fond of hearing the artist's weird and wonderful stories of the supernatural, and in after years frequently repeated one of them, whose scene was laid at Harvard College. In the text of the "Sibylline Leaves" Coleridge printed, as a note to the "America to Great Britain": "This poem, written

by an American gentleman, a valued and dear friend, I communicate to the reader for its moral no less than its patriotic spirit."

Allston now returned to London, and took a house on Tinney Street, which he furnished and fitted for his home. But it was ordained that his cherished dreams of domestic joys in the new domicile should fail of realization, and in their place should arise one of the profoundest sorrows of his life. Mrs. Allston had been incessant in her care over her husband's sickness, and returned to London with impaired health. After entering the new house her illness became very serious, and she died within two or three days. Leslie says: "She was never tired of talking of 'that little saint, William,' as she called him. The very clay of which the Channings were formed seemed to have religion in its composition. Mrs. Allston told me that her brother, when a child, used to turn a chair into a pulpit, and preach little sermons to the other children of the family. I saw Channing often during his short stay in London, — and to see him was to love him. At his request I accompanied him to the burying-ground of St. Pancras Chapel, to show him his

sister's grave." The only persons present at her funeral were her husband, Leslie, Morse, and John Howard Payne. The bereaved painter wrote to a friend, "The death of my wife left me nothing but my art, which then seemed to me as nothing."

Morse wrote home, saying: "Mrs. Allston, the wife of our beloved friend, died last evening, and the event overwhelmed us all in the deepest sorrow. As for Mr. Allston, for several hours after the death of his wife he was almost bereft of his reason. Mr. Leslie and I are applying our whole attention to him, and we have so far succeeded as to see him more composed."

When Mrs. Allston had passed away, the pleasant prospects of the future life in the new house seemed to have died with her, and the grieving artist soon abandoned a place whose memories were so painful. He went into lodgings in Buckingham Place, Fitzroy Square, where Leslie and Morse were living, in the centre of the artists' quarter of London. Suffering under extreme depression of spirits, his long and sleepless nights were haunted by horrid thoughts, and diabolical imprecations forced themselves into his mind.

Sincerely religious as he was, he was profoundly distressed by these visitations, and desired Leslie to consult Coleridge about his case. The great poet was found walking bareheaded in the garden at Highgate, and told Leslie: "Allston should say to himself, '*Nothing is me but my will.*' These thoughts, therefore, that force themselves on my mind, are no part of *me*, and there can be no guilt in them.' If he will make a strong effort to become indifferent to their recurrence, they will either cease, or cease to trouble him." Much more he said, in sympathy with the sensitive and suffering artist; and his messages were blessed in the peace which their suggestions procured for the unfortunate Allston. He also sought for consolation from a higher source, and was confirmed as a member of the Episcopal Church.

In 1815 Morse wrote of his master: "I never felt so low-spirited as when he was ill. I often thought, if he should be taken away at this time what an irreparable loss it would be, not only to me, but to America and to the world. Oh! he is an angel on earth. I cannot love him too much. Excuse my warmth; I never can speak of Mr. Allston but in raptures."

Washington Irving visited him frequently, and wrote: "Allston was dejected in spirits from the loss of his wife, but I thought a dash of melancholy had increased the amiable and winning graces of his character. I used to pass long evenings with him and Leslie; indeed Allston, if any one would keep him company, would sit up until cock-crowing, and it was hard to break away from the charms of his conversation. He was an admirable story-teller; for a ghost-story, none could surpass him. He acted the story as well as told it."

During the summer of 1816 Allston painted a picture of 'Rebecca at the Well,' which the London artists called one of his best works. He sent it to his friend, Mr. Van Schaick, of New York. The exhibition of this year contained his 'Morning in Italy'; and the preceding one had been adorned with the 'Donna Mencina in the Robbers' Cave' (*Gil Blas*, Book I. Chap. X.).

The scrupulous and sensitive conscience of the master is illustrated by an incident occurring at this time. He was in urgent need of money, and had recently found a purchaser for one of

his pictures. But when he thought the matter over, alone, at evening, he concluded that the subject of the painting was such that it might some time have an immoral effect on some perverted imagination. He immediately went to his patron's house and paid back the money, after which he took the picture home and destroyed it.

In September, 1817, Allston went to Paris, *via* Brighton and Dieppe, in company with Leslie and William Collins. They all made studies in the Louvre, and visited the houses of the chief artists of the city. Gérard was the only one who received them in person, and even he did not show them his pictures. Leslie has described the keen appreciation with which the party visited Notre Dame and the Louvre. Allston stayed in the French capital six weeks, and then returned to London.

Of the trip to Paris Collins wrote: "During this visit I had of course the very best opportunities of becoming acquainted with my friend's real character, which, in every new view I took of it, became more satisfactory. The sweetness and subdued cheerfulness of his temper, under

the various little inconveniences of our journey, was much to be admired ; and his great reverence for sacred things, and the entire purity and innocence of his conversation (coupled, as it was, with power of intellect and imagination), I never saw surpassed. Blessed be God, these qualities, these gifts, were effectual to the pulling down of many strongholds and vain imaginations on my part. How then can I be too grateful to Heaven for my acquaintance with one to whom, and to whose example, I owe so much ? It is a source of great comfort to me to know, that although we were for so many years separated by the Atlantic, he yet sometimes spoke of me ; and especially that so short a time before his death he had me in mind."

In December he sent his regards to Irving, in Leslie's letter, wherein allusions are made to the illustrations to "The Sketch Book" and "Knickerbocker's History," which Allston and Leslie had contracted to design. The former furnished but one of the eleven illustrations, a representation of Wouter Van Twiller deciding a lawsuit. At this time Allston had just finished '*The Angel Uriel in the Sun,*' from which he omitted

the positive colors of red, blue, and yellow, and yet produced a picture of rich and glowing tone. The angel's figure is colossal, though foreshortened to a height of but nine feet; and his air and attitude are very noble and heroic. The British Institution gave the artist a prize of one hundred and fifty guineas, on account of the picture, which Leslie held as equal to the best works of Paul Veronese.

- It is said that one day he heard a knock at the studio door, and arose to admit the visitor, who desired to know where his picture of 'Uriel' could be found. Allston brought out the glowing canvas from a dusty corner of the studio, and, when urged to state his price, declined, saying that he had often done so, and found none willing to pay it. "Would £400 be an adequate sum?" asked the visitor; and when the amazed artist said that that was more than he had ever asked, he gladly took the picture at that price. This generous patron was the Marquis of Stafford, who was ever afterward a warm friend and protector of Allston.

Under the inspiration of his artistic surroundings in London, Allston worked with marvellous

rapidity. The 'Uriel' was finished in six weeks, and he said, "I painted it at a heat,—for the Royal Academy Exhibition." The 'Elijah' was done in only three weeks. The 'Belshazzar,' the source of most of the master's failure, was sketched out before April, 1817. During the same year he painted the 'Clytie,' and at the Exhibition of 1818 he was represented by a Shakespearian scene, 'Hermia and Helena.' Another work of this period was the 'Falstaff and his Ragged Recruits,' a picture about four feet long and containing a dozen figures, most of which were portraits of actors then on the English stage.

Flaxman once said to Allston, upon being complimented on his designs from Homer and Dante, "I will now show you the sources of many of them"; and proceeded to lay before him a great variety of sketches from nature, which he had made in the streets and houses of London. Flaxman lived in the next house to that of Allston, on Fitzroy Square, and was very intimate with his genial neighbor.

While Abernethy was at the summit of his popularity Allston called on him to be treated

for a pain in his thigh, and was met at the door by a coarse-looking and shaggy-headed person, whom he took for a servant. "Come in, come in, mon," said this uncouth fellow, with a harsh Scotch accent ; to whom the amazed artist answered, "But Mr. Abernethy may be engaged ; perhaps I had better call another time." "Come in, mon, I say," rejoined the person at the door ; and pulling the visitor in, planted himself against the closed door, and added, "Now tell me what is your business with Mr. Abernethy, — I am Mr. Abernethy." Allston said, "I have come to consult you about an affection — " "What the de'il hae I to do with your affections ?" cried the blunt Scot ; and the gentle patient timidly rejoined, "Perhaps, Mr. Abernethy, you are engaged at present, and I had better call again." "De'il the bit, mon, de'il the bit, — come in, come in," said the great surgeon ; and led Allston and the attendant Morse into his office, where he examined and prescribed for the case with marvellous tenderness and skill.

After returning from Paris, Allston completed his picture of 'Jacob's Dream,' wherein a vast multitude of angels is seen, and the ladder to

heaven appears as "immeasurable flights of steps, with platform above platform, rising and extending into space immeasurable." Lord Egremont purchased this picture, and told Leslie that the figures therein reminded him more of Raphael than anything else he had seen by any modern artist. He was as much pleased with the artist as with his pictures, and gave him an urgent invitation to partake of the noble hospitalities of Petworth Castle, whose gates were ever open wide to men of genius. He visited the castle, and perhaps met Turner and Chantrey or some other of the artists who were such frequent guests there. He became an ardent admirer of Turner, whom he characterized as the greatest painter since the days of Claude.

In 1836 Freeman and Leslie visited Petworth, and found the 'Jacob's Dream' in the garrets of the mansion ; while in the Earl's library were two of Allston's daintiest cabinet-pictures. Leslie did not class the 'Jacob's Dream' with the best works of its author, though Tom Taylor says that it was his masterpiece. The Earl said of 'The Repose in Egypt,' that it was "transcendent in every artistic quality."

In March, 1819, Coleridge wrote to Leslie, inviting him to visit his house, and closing thus : "Are we not always *delighted* to see you? Now, too, more than ever, since, in addition to yourself, you are all we have of Allston." During the latter part of his sojourn in England, the artist had frequently visited the poet in the secluded asylum at Highgate, near London, where he was endeavoring, under Dr. Gilman's care, to free himself from the opium-habit. Here he used to meet Charles Lamb and other friends, and join in their intellectual conversations.

When Coleridge's tragedy of "Remorse" was first played, its author occupied a box near the stage, with Allston, Morse, Leslie, King, and Charles Lamb as his guests. In April, 1818, the master dined with Lamb, Haydon, and H. C. Robinson, and the latter said of him : "Allston has a mild manner, a soft voice, and a sentimental air with him, — not at all Yankeeish ; but his conversation does not indicate the talent displayed in his paintings."

The Earl of Egremont had introduced himself to Allston, and became one of his most munificent patrons. Before he left England he said

to him, "I hear you are going to America, — I am sorry for it. Well, if you do not meet with the encouragement which you deserve, in your own country, we shall all be very glad to see you back again."

It has been said that when Allston was in London he always ceased to work after he had made a popular sensation with some great picture, and the public heard no more of him for long periods, during which he rested himself by social recreation. Instead of following up the effect of a success, and keeping his name before the people, he gave himself up to long evenings of story-telling, at which he was unrivalled, and richly entertained his many friends with his delightful anecdotes and original tales. He was not accustomed to retire early, and his rest was eked out by sleeping until late in the morning. These intervals of *dolce far niente* were not the outgrowth of sluggishness or coldness towards his art, but were necessitated by his physical limitations and the lassitude following extraordinary efforts. Towards evening his spirits usually brightened, and until midnight flowed free and sparkling.

Men of taste and admirers of Allston's style have lamented his return to America, believing that if he had remained abroad, enjoying the stimulus of the sympathy and fellowship of the great British artists and literati, he might have advanced to a lofty position among the European disciples of art, and awakened still further the genial interest and patronage of the insular nobility. But Irving was one of those who advised him to return home, arguing that it was better to be the foremost artist in America than one among the many masters in Europe.

Late in July, 1818, Irving wrote to Leslie: "I shall try hard to see Allston before he sails. . . . I regret exceedingly that he goes to America, now that his prospects are opening so promisingly in this country; but perhaps it is all for the best. His 'Jacob's Dream' was a particular favorite of mine. I have gazed on it again and again, and the more I gazed the more I was delighted with it. I believe if I was a painter, I could at this moment take a pencil and delineate the whole, with the attitude and expression of every figure."

Irving once wrote: "The road to fame and for-

tune was now open to Allston ; he had but to remain in England, and follow up the signal impression he had made. Unfortunately, previous to this recent success, he had been disheartened by domestic affliction, and by the uncertainty of his pecuniary prospects, and had made arrangements to return to America. I arrived in London a few days before his departure, full of literary schemes, and delighted with the idea of our pursuing our several arts in fellowship. It was a sad blow to me to have this day-dream again dispelled. I urged him to remain and complete his grand painting of 'Belshazzar's Feast,' the study of which gave promise of the highest kind of excellence. Some of the best patrons of the art were equally urgent. He was not to be persuaded, and I saw him depart with still deeper and more painful regret than I had parted with him in our youthful days at Rome. I think our separation was a loss to both of us, — to me a grievous one. The companionship of such a man is invaluable. For his own part, had he remained in England for a few years longer, surrounded by everything to encourage and stimulate him, I have no doubt he would

have been at the head of his art. He appeared to me to possess more than any contemporary the spirit of the old masters ; and his merits were becoming widely appreciated."

Irving had such a high opinion of his friend's critical ability that he read to him the manuscript of "The Sketch-Book," to draw forth his comments thereon. The author felt a doubt as to whether he had better publish the Legend of Sleepy Hollow, but Allston conferred a lasting favor on American literature by persuading him to do so.

Says Allston : "Next to my own country, I love England, the land of my ancestors. I should indeed be ungrateful if I did not love a country from which I have never received other than kindness ; in which, even during the late war, I was never made to feel that I was a foreigner. By the English artists, among whom I number some of my most valued friends, I was uniformly treated with openness and liberality. Out of the art, too, I found many fast and generous friends.

"Leslie, Irving, and Sir Thomas Lawrence were the last persons I shook hands with on

leaving London. Irving and Leslie had accompanied me to the stage, and Sir Thomas, who was passing by on his morning ride, kindly stopped to offer me his good wishes. It is pleasant to have the last interview with those whom we wish to remember associated with kind feelings."

The homeward-bound artist crossed the ocean in the ship *Galen*, and met with much tempestuous weather. During the height of one of the worst gales of the season he remained on deck, engaged in argument with the captain as to whether two thirds of the ship's keel was not thrown clear of the sea at one time, and maintaining an unperturbed demeanor amid the terrors of the storm. He sketched the *Galen* as he supposed that she appeared in the heaviest seas.

CHAPTER IV.

The Studio at Boston. — Chester Harding. — Academic Honors.
— Horatio Greenough. — Washington Irving. — De Veaux. —
Morse.

HEAR Allston's own sentences: "A homesickness, which (in spite of some of the best and kindest friends, and every encouragement that I could wish as an artist) I could not overcome, brought me back to my own country in 1818. We made Boston Harbor on a clear evening in October. It was an evening to remember! The wind fell and left our ship almost stationary on a long low swell, as smooth as glass, and undulating under one of our gorgeous autumnal skies like a prairie of amber. The moon looked down upon us like a living thing, as if to bid us welcome, and the fanciful thought is still in my memory that she broke her image on the water to make partners for a dance of fire-flies, — and they *did* dance, if I ever saw dancing. Another thought recurs: that I had returned to a mighty empire, —

that I was in the very waters which the gallant *Constitution* had first broken, whose building I saw while at college, and whose 'slaughter-breathing brass,' to use a quotation from worthy Cotton Mather's *Magnalia*, *but now* 'grew hot and spoke' *her name* among the nations."

At that time Boston was a compact little city, of about 40,000 inhabitants, with a lucrative trade to the East Indies and other remote shores, and enjoying a dignified leisure which was undisturbed by the intense commercial activities of to-day. There were no such wide chasms between the different divisions of society as now exist, for there were no princely families on the one side, nor paupers on the other. Many of the aristocrats had expatriated themselves when the royal armies abandoned the city; and most of those who remained were slowly and peacefully laying the foundations of future social dynasties.

Allston's studio was established in the large barn on John Prince's estate, near the northwest corner of High Street and Pearl Street, and in close proximity to the houses of the Quincys, Perkinses, and Parsonses. His rooms were on Sister Street, which ran out of Federal Street

near Dr. Channing's church, and he got his meals at the celebrated restaurant of Rouillard, the successor of Monsieur Julien, at the corner of Milk and Congress Streets.

On Chester Harding's return from Europe he settled in Boston, and says, in his "Egotistography": "I had now become intimately acquainted with Mr. Allston. His habits were peculiar in many respects. He lived alone, dining at six o'clock, and sitting up far into the night. He breakfasted at eleven or twelve. He usually spent three or four evenings, or rather nights, at my house every week ; and I greatly enjoyed his conversation, which was of the most polished and refined order, and always instructive. I sometimes called at his studio. It was an old barn, very large, and as cheerless as any anchorite could desire. He never had it swept, and the accumulation of the dust of many years was an inch deep. You could see a track, leading through it to some remote corner of the room, as plainly as in new-fallen snow. He saw few friends in his room ; lived almost in solitude, with only his own great thoughts to sustain him."

Early in 1819 Allston wrote to Morse, saying :

"Something like encouragement seems to appear in our horizon ; and if we have any talents, we owe something to our country when she is disposed to foster them." At the same time he received an official communication from the secretary of the Royal Academy, stating that he had been elected an associate of that body, attended with congratulatory letters from Leslie and Collins. He was justly proud of having obtained this signal honor without canvassing, or begging for votes. A few years later, on the occurrence of a vacancy, he would have been appointed an Academician, but that the laws of the Royal Academy forbade that honor to persons who were not residents of the United Kingdom.

In November he received another letter from Collins, congratulating him on his election to the Academy, and sending him kind messages from Wordsworth, Southey, Coleridge, and Sir George Beaumont. In his answer, Allston excuses a delay, on the plea of his well-known habits of procrastination, and says: "I assure you I have written you at least twenty letters *in my head*, whilst I have been smoking my

usual evening cigar." He thus expresses his gratification at the election to the Academy: "To my countrymen here, who value highly all foreign honors, it seems to have given almost as much pleasure as if it had been bestowed on the country; it must, therefore, be no small aid to my professional interests." He adds that there is no probability of his returning to England, since he had already met with most liberal patronage in Boston, and hoped to found there an English school of art. He believed there was a quicker appreciation of art among the Americans than in any other country.

About this time Allston was one of the leaders in the movement which resulted in a statue of Washington, by Chantrey, being placed in the Massachusetts State House; and was frequently in communication with the jovial old sculptor, who had been his friend while in England.

Allston's position on the vexed question of his day was clearly defined on his return from Europe, when he found that his step father had recently died, having bequeathed him a young negro woman named Diana. Instead of selling her in the Charleston slave-market, for such a

sum as would have delighted an impecunious artist, he immediately emancipated her, and gave her the legal free papers.

Allston had a violent dislike to President Jackson, and once declined to paint a battle in which he commanded, in terms almost of anger. Governor Hamilton of South Carolina induced Governor Everett of Massachusetts to attempt his good offices in softening the obdurate painter, but in vain.

The Allstons of South Carolina frequently visited New England, and during one of these sojourns the Hon. John A. Allston persuaded Morse, his kinsman's *protégé*, to go to Charleston and open a studio. There the young artist met with great success, both socially and professionally, and remained five months, painting sixty-two portraits. John A. Allston owned a fine picture gallery, and had Morse portray his lovely daughter for it, draped in white, ordering the addition of "the most superb landscape you are capable of designing." The artist afterwards presented his patron with the great painting of 'The Judgment of Jupiter.' After Morse's marriage he returned to Charleston, where he

acted as the agent of his old master in disposing of certain pictures, and kept up an interesting correspondence with him.

Governor R. F. W. Allston several times asked his famous kinsman to paint him a picture, but the only answer would be, "Robert, I must paint for money,"—as if the idea of taking money from a relative was quite out of the reach of possibility.

In July, 1821, Allston became acquainted with Thomas Sully, the eminent portrait-painter, who spent several months in Boston, making a highly finished copy of Mr. Wiggin's picture of 'The Capuchin Chapel,' painted by Granet. The master was also a friend of Gilbert Stuart, then nearly seventy years old, and in 1828 wrote an eloquent and appreciative eulogy upon him, for the *Daily Advertiser*.

When Dr. Channing went to Europe, in 1822, he carried a letter of introduction from Allston to Coleridge, and made such an impression upon the latter that he spoke of the great Boston divine as "a philosopher in both the possible renderings of the word, having the love of wisdom and the wisdom of love." This celebrated phrase he

used in a letter to Allston, telling of his walks and talks with Channing.

Horatio Greenough entered Harvard University in 1821, and was soon made acquainted with Allston, who became his master and intimate companion. The cravings of the enthusiastic youth for a life of noble achievement in art, sometime coldly treated by practical friends, were revived and stimulated in the presence of the lofty soul and earnest purpose of the great painter, and a marvellous sympathy grew up between the two. Greenough dwelt with Edmund Dana, and met Allston there every Saturday, when he was accustomed to visit his kinsman. Dana was endowed with fine critical taste and a profound knowledge of art and literature ; and the young student gladly hailed the approach of every seventh day, when he could listen to the inspiring conversation of such serene and benevolent sages. Greenough's mind was as elevated and as finely tempered as his form was heroic and symmetrical ; and Allston, rejoicing to find so genial and respectful an auditor, impressed on his susceptible spirit a lofty ideal of art, a feeling of the dignity of his chosen profession, cour-

age to meet its disciplining trials, and faith in the ultimate reward. These frequent meetings between the spiritual and prophet-like artist and the radiant young disciple were heavy with destiny for the latter, who wrote, many years later: "Allston was to me a father in what concerned my progress of every kind. He taught me first how to discriminate, how to think, how to feel. Before I knew him, I felt strongly, but blindly; and if I should never pass mediocrity, I should attribute it to my absence from him, so adapted did he seem to kindle and enlighten me, making me no longer myself, but, as it were, an emanation from his own soul." During his last visit to America the great sculptor said, with emotion, that the only thought which cast a shadow over his heart was that Allston was dead.

Percival's poem on "The Mind," delivered before the Connecticut Phi Beta Kappa in 1825, closed with a lament that America should permit so great an artist as Allston to be forced to earn his living in painting small sentimental pictures, while his greater capabilities were undeveloped.

In 1827 Allston received a favorable introduction to a wider circle of admirers, on displaying

several of his pictures in the exhibition at the Boston Athenæum. Among these were the Jeremiah, Miriam, Florimel, and Valentine. He was now entering on what many admirers call his philosophical system of painting, to which he devoted the last sixteen years of his life.

In 1828 William Collins induced Allston to act as godfather by proxy to his second son, who was named William Allston Collins ; and many years later Collins wrote to Dana : " I desire no better thing for him than that he may follow the example of his namesake, both as a painter and as a man." Mr. W. A. Collins is now celebrated as an accomplished author.

In 1829 Allston was asked to take as a pupil young De Veaux, of South Carolina, but declined, with the statement that he was not accustomed to receive students. He advised that his young compatriot should be placed with Chester Harding ; but Inman and Sully had the honor of teaching " the gifted, the generous, the lost De Veaux." Two years before his short life closed, the art-student wrote, from Italy : " SULLY is our REYNOLDS, and ALLSTON our WONDER,—I would not give him for less than Michael Angelo ! He is as fine as all the old masters together."

Washington Irving visited Allston in 1830, and found him "in the gray evening of life, apparently much retired from the world." He characterized him as "a man whose memory I hold in reverence and affection, as one of the purest, noblest, and most intellectual beings that ever honored me with his friendship." Mr. Dix, the last visitor at Sunnyside, a week before Irving's death, in 1859, chanced to speak of Allston, and thus describes the effect of that sweetly remembered name: "It set his soul all glowing with tender, affectionate enthusiasm. To hear the great painter so praised by the great writer, with a voice tremulous partly with infirmity but more with emotion, was something to keep as surely as if every word had been engraven with the point of a diamond."

George W. Flagg was one of Allston's best-beloved pupils, and one of whom he prophesied: "That boy, if I mistake not, will do great things one of these days. A great thing in his favor is, that his heart is as good as his head." The youth was also a relative of his master, since Allston's mother was his own grandmother. He was born at New Haven, but passed his boyhood

at Charleston, S. C., where he developed his artistic tastes at a very early age, and made a remarkable portrait of Bishop England when he was but fourteen years old. He remained nearly two years under the care of the great master, enjoying his affectionate instructions and lofty conversation, and learning not only the technic of his art but also of its noble treasures and vast possibilities. The teacher and pupil were frequently seen walking together, the former impressing high truths on his disciple's mind by doctrine, analogy, and incident. The religious tendencies and conscientious aims of art were developed in every way, with the necessity for aspiration and industry ; and the youth was instructed in the characters of the interesting men and beautiful women of Europe. One of Allston's sweetest poems was written for his kinsman, designing to show him that the elevated mind could find no satisfaction in mere pleasure, sought for itself alone. He also restrained him from inconsiderate criticism and the thoughtless dogmatism of an unripened mind.

Flagg designed 'A Boy listening to a Ghost-Story' and 'A Young Greek' while under All-

ston's care ; and at length painted ' Jacob and Rachel at the Well,' whose merit was acknowledged by the master in the words, " Now you may consider yourself an artist." Afterwards Flagg executed noteworthy pictures in Boston, New Haven, and London ; but was prevented by ill health from gaining the eminence which he might otherwise have attained.

Flagg was with Allston when he was painting the ' Spalatro,' and testifies to the rapt attention with which the artist regarded his work. He frequently showed his nervous sympathy for the characters he was portraying, by starting back from the canvas and assuming the attitude of the figure he was designing. This manner of instinctive imitation was a constant habit of the artist's, and illustrated his keen perception of the sentiment under treatment, and his thorough engrossment, physical and mental, in his work.

Another of Allston's pupils was Jared B. Flagg, George's brother, whose artistic career lasted nearly twenty years, or until 1854, when he took orders in the Episcopal Church. He was a member of the National Academy, and executed several highly praised ideal works, besides many

portraits. Nor have his later pastoral duties prevented him from making numerous excellent pictures, and taking an active interest in the Yale College Art Gallery.

Richard M. Staigg was another young artist who was enriched by Allston's counsel and encouragement, which he won by his beautiful miniature of Mrs. Amory, of Newport. Staigg was brought up at Newport, where he was acquainted with the relatives of Stuart and Malbone ; and studied the rich scale of colors on the palette of the former, and the exquisite miniature, 'The Hours,' of the latter. Allston's instruction was highly beneficial to his young disciple, who became eminent not only as a portrait-painter but also as a designer of vigorous and refined ideal pictures. One of his most delicate and memorable miniatures portrays the grand face of Allston ; and two others, representing Webster and Everett, have been exquisitely engraved.

The 'Elijah in the Desert' is a large picture, perhaps 6 × 4 feet in size, which Allston painted in London and brought home with him. In this great work the chief feature is a sublime and

illimitable desert-landscape, covered with rocks and sand, bounded by black mountains, and overhung with lowering clouds. The scene is dark and melancholy, but impressive in its calmness and silence. Elijah is a minor figure in the picture, and is hidden away among the grotesque and distorted roots of an enormous banyan-tree, the only tree in the whole wide landscape, and that dead and leafless. Hereunder flows the brook Cherith; and the ravens fly down with food for the outcast prophet. It has been said that this picture would have been far greater if Elijah and his whimsical tree had been omitted, leaving only the vast and solitary expanse of the desert.

This composition was painted with colors ground in milk, then varnished with copal, and retouched in oil-colors. It remained at the house of Allston's friend, Isaac P. Davis, until it was purchased (for \$1,500) by an English tourist, the Hon. Mr. Labouchere, M. P., who carried it home. In 1870 Mrs. S. Hooper, of Boston, repurchased the 'Elijah' (for \$4,000), and gave it to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

The 'Jeremiah' is a large and splendidly colored picture, 8 × 5 feet in size, and is founded on the thirty-sixth chapter of the Prophecy of Jeremiah. There are but two figures, those of the Prophet and Baruch his scribe. The former is sitting with his head majestically upraised, and lifts his right arm toward heaven, with the two middle fingers of the hand bent down and the others pointing upward, as if arrested suddenly and unconsciously. The head is the noblest and the expression the loftiest that Allston ever executed, nor could we imagine a more worthy conception as issuing from even Angelo's brain. The unsandalled right foot of the Prophet is one of the most noteworthy parts of the picture; and the temple architecture in the background, and the partly draped stone jar in the foreground, are executed with rare skill, the former in its aerial perspective and the latter in its Flemish minuteness of finish. Baruch's graceful figure is back to the spectator, sitting in the shadow, and bending over his tablets as if enthusiastically recording the Prophet's words.

The 'Jeremiah' has been likened to Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, or to a rich sunset,

in the harmony with which its manifold tints are blended into a delicious unity. Some critics esteem it as the greatest painting by Allston's hand. It was retained for fifty years by Miss Gibbs, the Newport lady for whom it was painted, and in 1866 was exposed for sale in the Redwood Library. Two years later it was purchased by Professor S. F. B. Morse, for \$ 7,000, and presented to Yale College.

In 1830 the master married again, and his second wife was a cousin of the first, being, like her, a granddaughter of William Ellery, the signer of the Declaration of Independence. Her father was Francis Dana, the Chief Justice of Massachusetts, who married Miss Elizabeth Ellery; and one of her brothers was Richard H. Dana, the poet. She was forty-six years old when Allston married her, and survived him until the year 1862.

CHAPTER V.

A Group of Pictures. — The Valentine, Rosalie, Beatrice, Spalatro, etc. — The 'Belshazzar's Feast.'

MR. ALLSTON painted between forty and fifty pictures in Europe, of which by far the greater number have disappeared. The choicest of his works after returning to America are now preserved in Boston, some in the Museum of Fine Arts, and others in the houses of some of the elder families. A few of these are hereinafter described.

'The Valentine' is a simply colored and composed picture, in which a lady is seen reading a letter, which she holds with both hands. It has been carefully restored, without impairing the merit of the coloring and its charming naturalness. It almost breathes, in the warm life which the skilfully mingled hues simulate, and the delicate gradations of the shadows. Ware says: "I have never been able to invent the terms that would sufficiently express my admiration of that

picture. . . . The art can go no further, nor as I believe has it ever gone any further." The model for this picture was Mrs. Russell, a sister of the first Mrs. Allston, a lady whom the artist greatly admired in view of her beautiful character, and whom he represented in several other pictures.

The 'Rosalie' is a graceful and thoughtful woman, sitting in the calm repose of deep contemplation, and twirling the golden chain that falls from her neck, with an exquisitely delicate hand. Ware has called this "one of the most graceful conceptions that artist was ever able to copy upon canvas." George W. Flagg attests that the head of this noble picture was finished in three hours, a marvellous celerity for such a slow and careful artist. She appears to be listening to music, passionate, yet peaceful, as if in the words of the poet-painter's song of 'Rosalie':

"O, pour upon my soul again
That sad, unearthly strain,
That seems from other worlds to plain;
Thus falling, falling from afar,
As if some melancholy star
Had mingled with her light her sighs,
And dropped them from the skies!

The rapid rise in the price of Allston's pictures after his death is seen in the fact that not long after that sad event \$ 5,000 was offered for the 'Rosalie,' and was refused.

The 'Beatrice' is not unlike the 'Rosalie' in its calm and contemplative air, though its repose is of a deeper and more permanent character. The face is beautiful, being still and self-possessed ; and is English rather than Italian in its powerful and transfigured sentiment. Her hair and eyes are soft and brown ; her complexion is suffused with tender rosy light ; and a strange charm emanates from the radiant face, though it is devoid of physical beauty. Mrs. Jameson calls this picture "most lovely" ; Mr. Jarves sees it as "weak and pale" ; and Dr. Holmes finds in it "the simple ease of Raphael."

'The Flight of Florimel' is based on an incident in Spenser's "Faerie Queen," showing a dimly lighted forest, without gloom or glare, through which, in the foreground, Florimel is flying on a white horse. Her golden raiment and fair hair form brilliant lights ; and her face, backward turned towards the pursuer, is filled with fright and consternation. This exquisite picture

was painted for the artist's friend, Loammi Baldwin.

'The Triumphal Song of Miriam on the Destruction of Pharaoh and his Hosts in the Red Sea' is a three-quarter-length figure, with one hand holding the timbrel and the other thrown upward. The picture is filled with exultant life and uplifting joy, and the dramatic effect is powerful in its inspiration. The 'Miriam' was originally bought by David Sears, for \$1,000, and is now owned by his son, Frederick R. Sears. Holmes called its coloring 'Titianesque,' and preferred it to any of the master's other pictures, holding it as a link between his scriptural and ideal compositions.

'The Spanish Girl,' one of Allston's most famous works, is notable chiefly for the felicitous art of the landscape background, a dreamy summer scene in the pastoral hill-country of Spain, full of suggestions to the imagination and the soul. The fair lady is sitting on the bank of a lake, which is as calm as a mill-pond, and the warm-tinted Sierra Morena rises beyond. The motive of the scene was set forth by the artist in a sweet poem, wherein Inez awaits by

the lake the return of her Isidore from the wars.

'The Death of King John,' though unfinished, was Allston's masterpiece in the expression of emotion in faces, varying from the utter misery of the conscience-stricken sovereign to the deep compassion of the people about his bedside. The design is true and simple, and the composition is complete.

'The Evening Hymn' is a rich and Claude-like picture, in which a ruined Italian castle, by the water-side, is seen in the warm sunset light. On the moss-grown causeway a maiden is sitting, guitar in hand, with her pure and impassioned face upturned to heaven, as if the hymn was already trembling on her lips.

'The Roman Lady' is represented as reading a book which she holds before her. The face is hard and inanimate in its gravity and absorption ; but the hands are masterpieces of art, and display the most splendid and natural coloring.

The 'Amy Robsart' was painted for John A. Lowell. It has been suggested that this work illustrates the proverbial inequality of genius, since it shows inferiority both in coloring and

in design. On the other hand, Sumner, who saw it while fresh and new, speaks of its beautiful golden hair, "and that sweet look of feeling which you find in all Allston's pictures, particularly of women, — *qualem decet esse sororum.*"

'The Sisters' is a picture of two young girls, in three-quarter size, Titianesque in color, and with the attitude of one of the figures taken from Titian's portrait of his daughter, as Allston frankly stated in the Catalogue.

'The Tuscan Girl' is a fair maiden in a forest, wrapped in meditation, and is described in Allston's poem, beginning, —

"How pleasant and how sad the turning tide
Of human life, where side by side
The child and youth begin to glide
Along the vale of years;
The pure twin-being for a little space,
With lightsome heart, and yet a graver face,
Too young for woe, but not for tears!"

The 'Lorenzo and Jessica' is one of the master's smallest pictures, and one of his most perfect, in the Giorgionesque manner. Therein two lovers are seen sitting side by side, in the hushed and cloudless twilight, gazing together towards the glowing west. Through the deep and

now sunken tones of the picture the Italian villa in the background scarcely appears. About the time that this picture was finished the artist was visited by Charles Fraser, his old Carolina friend, and Robert C. Winthrop, to whom he repeated certain verses which he had composed about the subject on which he had been engaged.

The 'Italian Landscape' is a broad and brilliant composition, replete with music and perfume, and overspread with sweet sunshine and poetic repose. It is a far-expanding plain, with a round-arched bridge crossing a still river, a rugged mountain rising majestically in the distance, and a tall stone-pine in the foreground. The 'American Scenery' is a smaller landscape, wrapped in the haze of autumn, with a lonely horseman riding through the rural solitudes. Other poetic phases of nature which Allston illustrated were 'A Sunrise on the Mediterranean,' 'After Sunset,' 'Moonlight,' 'A Forest Scene,' and 'A Mountain Landscape.'

The 'Swiss Landscape' is a grand and shadowy scene, where dark forms appear upon a dim and solitary pathway, near a lake whose waters reflect the stiff pines on the banks and the piles

of rugged rocks above. Over all is spread the clear and crystalline atmosphere of the Alps, with stately mountain-forms looming into the sky.

The picture of 'Spalatro's Vision of the Bloody Hand' is founded on a scene in Mrs. Radcliffe's novel of "The Italian," when the monk Schedoni and the assassin Spalatro are advancing through a dark corridor to murder Elena, and Spalatro is suddenly horrified by the apparition of a beckoning bloody hand. He is seen half crouching, as if frozen with intense supernatural fear, and his eyes are dilated with horror; while the undismayed priest stands erect and haughty, holding the lamp above his head, and looking forward into the gloom with clear and steady eye. The picture was but $2\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$ feet in size, yet it may well be doubted if any other painting whatever of equal smallness was capable of producing such powerful emotions. Allston justly regarded this as one of his best works; and nowhere else did he show forth so clearly his intense realization of the power of conscience, a feeling which always swayed him with marvellous effect. The picture was burned in 1873, in a mansion on the Hudson.

The 'Spalatro' was painted for Mr. Ball of South Carolina, who chose this from a number of subjects proposed by the artist. Most of the years 1830 and 1831 were spent on this picture, which afterwards for a time graced the Scollay mansion, in Boston. The friends of the master proposed to have it exhibited, for his benefit, since the amount paid for it had been very inadequate to the labor. But he refused to consent to such an exhibition, remarking also: "It was said of Paul Veronese that when he painted for convents he was sometimes paid half in money and half in masses. In like manner I am sometimes content to be paid half in money and part in praises."

One of the most attractive and accessible souvenirs of Allston is the series of certain of his designs, published in Boston soon after his death. This collection includes twenty plates, the largest of which is 20 × 30 inches, from outlines in umber and hasty sketches in chalk. They are full of idealism and refinement, purity and loftiness of conception; and show a profound knowledge of the human form, and the beauty and grace of its best estate. The en-

gravings were skilfully made by the Cheney brothers, and the broad chalk lines were imitated by blending delicate parallel lines. There are six plates from 'Michael Setting the Heavenly Watch,' and four (of angels) from 'Jacob's Dream.' Others represent 'Uriel in the Sun,' 'A Sibyl,' 'Heliodorus,' 'Prometheus,' 'The Prodigal Son,' 'Dido and Æneas,' and a ship in a gale at sea. The latter was probably taken from the sketch of which Mrs. Jameson said, "It was a sea-piece,—a thunder-storm retiring, and a frigate bending to the gale; it was merely a sketch in white chalk upon a red ground, and about five feet high, as nearly as I can recollect,—not even the dead coloring was laid on; I never saw such an effect produced by such a vehicle, and had not mine own eyes seen it, I could not have conceived or believed it possible. There was absolute motion in the clouds and waves,—all the poetry, all the tumult of the tempest were there!—and, I repeat, it was a sketch in white chalk,—not even a shadow!" Another design in the book was the 'Fairies on the Seashore,' a graceful fancy, with a column of fairies rising from the sea-washed strand into

the bright sky. Mr. W. H. Prescott sent a copy of this work to Lord Morpeth, praising it highly, and quoting Allston's poetry freely.

The 'Belshazzar's Feast' took form in the artist's mind as early as April, 1817, as appears in his letter of that date to Irving: "One of these subjects (and the most important) is the large picture,—the prophet Daniel interpreting the handwriting on the wall before Belshazzar. I have made a highly finished sketch of it. I think the composition the best I have ever made. It contains a multitude of figures, and (if I may be allowed to say so) they are without confusion. Don't you think it a fine subject? I know not any that so happily unites the magnificent and the awful. A mighty sovereign, surrounded by his whole court, intoxicated with his own state, in the midst of his revelry palsied in a moment, under the spell of a preternatural hand suddenly tracing his doom on the wall before him; his powerless limbs, like a wounded spider's, shrunk up to his body, while his heart, compressed to a point, is only kept from vanishing by the terrific suspense that animates it during the interpretation of his mysterious sentence. His less guilty

but scarcely less agitated queen, the panic-struck courtiers and concubines, the splendid and deserted banquet-table, the half-arrogant, half-astounded magicians, the holy vessels of the temple (shining as it were in triumph through the gloom), and the calm, solemn contrast of the prophet, standing, like an animated pillar, in the midst, breathing forth the oracular destruction of the empire!"

The sketch alluded to is now in the possession of Mr. Richard H. Dana, who also has the sketch of 'Christ Healing the Sick,' a powerful one of the head of Jeremiah, a portrait of Coleridge, a large landscape, and several other unfinished works of his famous kinsman.

The great painting of 'Belshazzar's Feast' was begun in England, before 1818, on a canvas 16 × 12 feet in size. When the artist returned to America, he said of it: "All the laborious part is over, but there still remains about six or eight months' more work to do to it." He little dreamed that the twenty-five remaining years of his life would not avail to finish it, and that sixty years later it would be hung in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, still incomplete, though

glorious. This great composition was valued at \$ 10,000, held by several wealthy patrons in ten shares, of which a certain percentage was paid in advance. It must have been some unpleasant experiences in this matter which led him to advise Sully, "O, do not undertake anything that cannot be accomplished by your own means."

Immediately on his return from England Allston unrolled the almost finished picture, and submitted it to the honest severity of Stuart's criticism. That great painter pointed out certain radical errors in the work, which its author acknowledged, and had perhaps foreseen; and Allston thereupon began the immense task of reconstructing the entire design. He was obliged to devote many weeks to changing the perspective, during which he made more than twenty thousand chalk-lines in circles and arcs, to bring the amended figures into correct drawing. The operations of laying in the ground-colors and finishing them with the glazing colors followed, involving more labor than the painting of a new picture on a fresh canvas would have cost, besides the terrible mental strain and distress which necessarily ensued. Stuart told Dr. Channing,

at the beginning, that it would never be finished, because of "the rapid growth of the artist's mind, so that the work of this month or year was felt to be imperfect the next, under the better knowledge of more time, and must be done over again, or greatly altered, and, therefore, could never come to an end." But this opinion seems unwarranted, and had the great master's life been spared a little longer he would doubtless have linked the name of the Assyrian king with the noblest achievement of American art. Charles Sumner thought that if Allston's last illness had been a lingering one, he would have ordered the destruction of the unfinished picture.

Martin's famous picture of 'Belshazzar's Feast' was exhibited in London in 1821, and Allston wrote to its author that he "would not mind a walk of ten miles, over a quickset hedge, before breakfast, to see it." Martin said: "This is something, from a bad walker and a worse riser." The subject had been suggested to him by Allston, who held a conception of its proper composition totally different from his own, and the two artists had a prolonged discussion on the question. Allston suggested that Martin's conception

was well set forth in a prize poem at Cambridge, written by T. S. Hughes, which the English painter afterwards read, and then determined to paint the picture. Leslie and other friends endeavored to dissuade him from his proposed treatment of the subject, but in vain. It is said that he borrowed Allston's idea of making the light in the picture proceed from the miraculous inscription, and that Allston abandoned his own version upon hearing of this plagiarism.

In 1823 Allston showed to Chester Harding and Jonathan Mason the great picture in his studio. It was all finished then, except the single figure of Daniel, and Allston told his visitors to see Leslie when they reached England, and describe the work to him, but to allow no one else to hear of it.

When Harding went to Washington, in the winter of 1828, he gave Allston the use of his spacious studio, wherein to finish the '*Belshazzar's Feast*': "He painted all winter, instead, on a landscape; and when I came home, I found he had wiped out his winter's work, saying it was not worthy of him. He smoked incessantly, became nervous, and was haunted by fears that his great picture

would not come up to the standard of his high reputation. One day he went to his friend Loammi Baldwin, and said, 'I have to-day blotted out my four years' work on my 'Handwriting on the Wall.'"

'The delay in completing this immense composition' was a circumstance which sorely troubled the artist for years, and called forth many annoying inquiries from the public, if not from the subscribers to the picture. But while thus vexed by worldly cares and responsibilities, he was unable to consecrate his time to the great work, and therefore it remained unfinished. He wrote: "Indeed, I have *already* bestowed upon it as much mental and manual labor as, under another state of mind, would have completed several such pictures. But to go into the subject of all the obstacles and the hindrances upon my spirit would hardly be consistent with delicacy and self-respect." The public had formed exaggerated ideas of the new picture, in view of the artist's well-known genius and prolonged seclusion, and Allston was alarmed by the general prediction that the 'Belshazzar's Feast' was destined to be one of the most brilliant triumphs of American art.

Some of his friends had stood as models and others had heard him describe his conception of the proper treatment of the theme ; and from these glowing accounts had been scattered abroad, and the public was in an expectant attitude. The dreary consciousness of pecuniary embarrassments, the lack of proper models and other properties, and the delicate health of the artist combined to persuade him, from time to time, that he had undertaken a task too great for his means and strength, and caused him to put it aside in discouragement and dissatisfaction. Thus, frequently abandoned and as often renewed, the work went on slowly for a quarter of a century, and was finally left unfinished, a mere fragment, yet the delight of later generations. He was at work on this picture less than seven hours before he died.

The amount of labor freely lavished on the 'Belshazzar's Feast' was enormous, and for years the slight and feeble figure of the artist moved up the ladders and along the stagings before the great canvas, laden with the house-painter's brushes which put on the priming coats, and then going through the prolonged toils of finishing the work in its

details. Most of this should have been done by pupils, but of such there were none, and the task was devolved all too heavily, in summer's heat and winter's frost, on one weary pair of hands. The architecture and objects of still-life in the picture are worked up with infinite labor, and wasted many golden days. The unnatural and elongated human figures which still remain unchanged and unfinished show the direction of the artist's labors, and their exceeding complexity and magnitude.

Perhaps he was led into the pursuit of conceptions alien to his nature by the overmastering power with which the scene of the fifth chapter of *Daniel* seized and excited him, in its artistic potentialities. It may be, also, that he yielded to the mania of British artists, in his time, for painting huge canvases in the "grand style," as West, Barry, and others had done. But the vast works of Tintoretto were as far removed from his manifestation of genius as the achievements of the skilful stone-carver are from those of the lapidary,—and for this great and stately, but incomplete and unsatisfactory, ruin of art and imagination, America has had to pay too dearly,

in the loss of many a delicate and highly polished jewel of painting which might otherwise have been hers.

In this great composition Allston attempted to accomplish something to which his genius was unsuited, though it was fully equal to it. Imagination, mental force, religious fervor, — all these he had in sufficient degree, but his preference was for another kind of subject, and his monastic spirit chose to pour itself more richly into simpler subjects. In life he disliked crowds and any manner of bustling confusion, and so also in art he chose quiet scenes, of simple elements, single figures, or solitary landscapes, and into these he put himself with abundant faith and sympathy. How different was the conception of his vast illumination of the Assyrian drama!

The scene represented is that sublime event which is described in the fifth chapter of Daniel, when "Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand"; and while he and his princes and concubines are drinking from the golden vessels plundered from the temple of Jehovah at Jerusalem, a hand appears, writing on the

wall of the palace. The terrified king and his soothsayers cannot read the inscription, and Daniel, "in whom is the spirit of the holy gods," is summoned, and interprets it as a prediction of the speedy fall of the kingdom. The scene shows the great palace-hall, with the enthroned king, and the queen and her attendants, the foreground being occupied by Daniel and the astrologers, the middle distance by the feasters around their table, and the remote background by the vast interior of a temple, with the idol thereof under a blazing circle of lights, and people hurrying up the broad steps in terror.

The king's face is devoid of obvious and caricatured terror, but his whole form seems to be cramped and frozen by unspeakable awe,—at least, so the artist strove to represent it. The form of Daniel is good, but the face is not endowed with striking power,—nor does it represent Daniel Webster, as the gossips of those days said that it would. The minor groups show some faces convulsed with terror and others absolutely unmoved and apparently without fear, concerning which it is easier to believe that the artist's design is not yet fully understood than that he

has laboriously portrayed an absurdity, or avoided a theatrical vulgarity by introducing an abnormal apathy. The grandest face in the picture is that of the queen, full of regal beauty and pride, scornful and contemptuous, towering in heroic self-dependence beside the sinking king, yet holding her attendant's hand for support. Her costume is magnificent, and was perfectly and delicately finished.

The architecture of the palace-hall is marked by rows of small columns, which Ware calls a fatal blemish on the picture; as producing an effect of littleness and meanness quite inadmissible in Assyrian buildings, and foreign to grandeur and sublimity. The dimly seen and towering pillars of the idol's temple, with its countless stairs, and the mysterious god, wrapped in a wonderful atmosphere of distance, are set in the strongest contrast, and exhibit a triumphant excellence.

The grand and crowning excellence of the picture is in its wealth of gorgeous Venetian coloring, pure and harmonious, and in all parts resplendent. The most notable points, in this regard, are the figure of the queen, Daniel's

head, the malignant astrologer who looks out of the picture, and the group of Jews in the centre. The latter, though in the shadow, is finished with the most exquisite delicacy and perfection, and appears almost self-luminous. The harmony of the entire composition seems the product of a single day of inspired labor, when the great thought at once took faultless form, rather than the toilsome and oft-abandoned drudgery of twenty-five years.

An eminent and competent critic has said that if this picture had been finished "it would have gone near to eclipse all that had gone before it," claiming for it not only sublimity of conception and richness of coloring, but also a rare minuteness of finish throughout the work, "which, though so large, completed, would have had at once all the truth and delicacy of a cabinet gem, and the breadth and grandeur which belong to colossal subjects ; which is just the truth of Nature, whose works, though ever so large, are never finished with any the less minuteness and perfection."

CHAPTER VI.

The Studio at Cambridgeport. — Lowell's Pen-Sketch. — Mrs. Jameson. — The Exhibition. — Eminent Friends. — The Death of Allston.

EARLY in 1831 Allston established himself in a new painting-room, which he had built at Cambridgeport, in which village he also made his home. His former studio in Boston was converted into a livery stable, and after that event he had painted in a small chamber. The 'Belshazzar's Feast' had been rolled up and put away in a packing-case for three years, for the artist had constant need of money, and must needs paint small pictures to earn it. But he said, at this time, that if he ever became free from his debts and the pressing demands of daily existence, he should devote the remainder of his life to large paintings. In a letter to McMurtrie he wrote: "I have been married about a year, and this village is now my home. It is but two miles from Boston, where I can be

at any time, by means of an hourly stage, in twenty minutes. I am in better health, and certainly in better spirits, than I have been these ten years."

He chose to settle in Cambridgeport on account of its close vicinity both to Boston and to Harvard College, within easy walk of his friends at either place. He needed a large quantity of land for the new house and studio, and could get it in that village at slight expense. As to the unattractiveness of Cambridgeport as a place of residence he cared but little, since he was not affected by outside surroundings. In all Cambridge there were but 6,000 inhabitants at this time. The greater part of what is now Cambridgeport was then (in the native dialect) a *huckleberry pastur*. Woods were not wanting on its outskirts, of pine and oak and maple, and the rarer tupelo with downward limbs. Allston's house was at the corner of Magazine and Auburn Streets ; and the studio was hard by, in the rear of the Baptist Church of the village, having but one door, and that on the side away from the street, opening on a path which led across the garden to the artist's house. There

were several small trees and bits of shrubbery between the two buildings, and the studio door was enarched with climbing vines. The painting-room had but a single window, which opened toward the garden, and was very long and high. The children of the vicinity had many a ghostly theory about this lone studio of New England. Within, the room was surrounded by cabinets, whose doors bore many a rude sketch and inscription.

Mrs. Allston's means were not small, and hence the dreamy artist was free from the desolating apprehensions of want and poverty.

The Shepard Congregational Society was formed in 1829, when the old First Parish in Cambridge became Unitarian. In 1830-31 the new society built a meeting-house, partly from plans furnished by Allston, who used to lead out his friends and visitors at evening to a point about a third of a mile southeast of the building, and bid them to admire it, repeating the lines : —

"If thou wouldst view fair Melrose aright,
Go visit it by the pale moonlight."

After leaving Boston, Allston usually attended this church, with which his wife and her family

were closely connected, finding there as strong a defence of Trinitarianism as in his own Episcopal Church. On saints' days and other high ecclesiastical festivals he used to attend service at St. Paul's, in Boston. He was fond of reading the Bible and the works of the old Anglican divines, and once wrote a long and able essay on Christianity as supplying an inherent want of human nature.

Let us read James Russell Lowell's exquisite pen-sketch of our Allston: "So refined was his whole appearance, so fastidiously neat his apparel, — but with a neatness that seemed less the result of care and plan than a something as proper to the man as whiteness to the lily, — that you would have at once classed him with those individuals, rarer than great captains and almost as rare as great poets, whom Nature sends into the world to fill the arduous office of Gentleman. . . . A *nimbus* of hair, fine as an infant's, and early white, showing refinement of organization and the predominance of the spiritual over the physical, undulated and floated around a face that seemed like pale flame, and over which the flitting shades of expression chased each other,

fugitive and gleaming as waves upon a field of rye. It was a countenance that, without any beauty of feature, was very beautiful. I have said that it looked like pale flame, and can find no other words for the impression it gave. Here was a man all soul, whose body seemed a lump of finest clay, whose service was to feed with magic oils, rare and fragrant, that wavering fire which hovered over it. You, who are an adept in such matters, would have detected in the eyes that artist-look which seems to see pictures ever in the air, and which, if it fall on you, makes you feel as if all the world were a gallery, and you yourself the rather indifferent Portrait of a Gentleman hung therein.

“Allston carried thither [to Italy] a nature open on the southern side, and brought it back so steeped in rich Italian sunshine that the east winds (whether physical or intellectual) of Boston and the dusts of Cambridgeport assailed it in vain. To that bare wooden studio one might go to breathe Venetian air, and, better yet, the very spirit wherein the elder brothers of Art labored, etherealized by metaphysical speculation and sublimed by religious fervor. The beautiful

old man ! Here was genius with no volcanic explosions (the mechanical result of vulgar gunpowder often), but lovely as a Lapland night ; here was fame, not sought after nor worn in any cheap French fashion as a ribbon at the button-hole, but so gentle, so retiring, that it seemed no more than an armored and emboldened modesty ; here was ambition, undebased by rivalry and incapable of the sidelong look ; and all these massed and harmonized together into a purity and depth of character, into a *tone*, which made the daily life of the man the greatest masterpiece of the artist."

Allston's life at Cambridgeport was one of great seclusion, as became a scholar, an artist, and an invalid. He had a small but choice circle of friends, including his kindred and a few intellectual companions, and frequently welcomed artists and travellers to his studio. But the hospitalities of the great families of Boston and Cambridge, though freely offered to him, were generally declined, since he preferred to devote his life to nobler pursuits than those of mere social pleasure. His high religious concentration and reverent consecration to the true and

the beautiful attracted to him the noblest minds of New England, as they had previously drawn the gentle Malbone, the philosophic Coleridge, and the cultured Irving. He won the admiration and homage of the choicest men and women of his age and race ; and passed through life with an earnest love for his fellows and a fearless faith in God.

Mrs. Jameson visited Allston in Cambridgeport, and said that the New Englanders "triumphed in the astonishment and admiration of a stranger who started to find Venetian sentiment, grandeur, and color in the works of a Boston painter, buried out of sight, almost out of mind, for five-and-twenty years,—a whole generation of European amateurs. . . . He was an admirable narrator, his good stories being often invented for the occasion. The vivacity of his conceptions, and the glowing language in which he could clothe them, rendered his conversation inexpressibly delightful and exciting. I remember, after an evening spent with him, returning home very, very late (I think it was near three in the morning), with the feelings of one who had been magnetized." Such was still his custom, to spend a

great part of the night in conversation, and then to rise very late. Miss Clarke once informed him that she was engaged in painting a sunrise scene, and rose early in order to see the sun when it passed above the horizon. "How *does* it look?" asked he, in perfect good faith.

In 1835 Allston's time was so thoroughly engaged that he was obliged to decline several commissions, and wrote to Hayward stating that he had engagements on hand which would occupy him for over two years in advance. The wealthy citizens of Boston were unsparing in their liberality towards him, whom they admired as much as a man as they respected as an artist.

Soon afterwards the master wrote: "I had a delightful visit from Morse. Its only fault was being too short. The same from my old friend Fraser." Morse, the President of the National Academy, on returning from this journey, exclaimed: "I go to Allston as a comet goes to the sun, not to add to his material, but to imbibe light from him." Morse found his old master delightfully situated at Cambridge, engrossed by congenial studies and assiduous labors, and prophesied that the 'Michael setting the Guard

of the Heavenly Host at the Gates of Paradise,' and other pictures then under way, would rank him by the side of Raphael. In 1834 Dunlap — shall we not call him the American Vasari? — placed Allston at the head of living artists.

When the Government was arranging the decoration of the Rotunda in the Capitol, Allston was commissioned to paint the great pictures for the panels. He, however, declined this flattering appointment, and urged the fitness of Morse, his old pupil, then President of the National Academy of Design. But John Quincy Adams introduced a resolution in Congress in favor of foreign artists, alleging that there were no American painters competent to the work ; and Fenimore Cooper answered him with a severe and masterly paper in the New York *Evening Post*. This reply was attributed to Morse, whose name was therefore rejected by the committee ; and Allston hastened to offer his sympathy and consolation. When the master was consulted, some years before, as to his willingness to paint pictures for the Rotunda, he had replied : "I will undertake one only, and I choose my own subject. No battle-piece." He often avowed his disinclination

to paint battle scenes, — Charles Sumner has borne witness to it, and who then can doubt?

Allston united with Cooper and Everett in securing for Greenough the Government commission for the statue of Washington, which resulted in the noble work now in the Capitol Park at Washington. In later years he joined Sumner in aiding Greenough and Crawford; and on the very evening of his death he talked enthusiastically of Crawford and his works. He was also very friendly to G. P. A. Healy, who gave the master one of his skilful copies after Titian.

In 1838 Allston frequently visited Harding's, where he met N. P. Willis, then a handsome and poetic young man, with a free and sparkling pen. When these two skilful story-tellers met, the winged hours flew rapidly by, and brought the midnight full soon. About this same time Wordsworth inquired earnestly of Charles Sumner about the welfare of Allston, whom he "regarded as the first artist of the age, and was attached to by twofold relations, — first, as his own friend, and then as the affectionate friend of Coleridge." Ticknor wrote home to Dana, "There is not a man in Europe who can paint a picture like All-

ston." Giulian C. Verplanck characterized the artist as *Arte clarus, literis ornatus, moribus pulchrior*.

Allston's chief pupil while at Cambridge was Miss Sarah Clarke, the sister of James Freeman Clarke, and now a resident of Rome. She was an intimate friend of Margaret Fuller, who once said of her: "Her neighborhood casts the mildness and purity too of the moonbeam on the else party-colored scene."

To a young man who asked his advice about becoming an artist, he said: "It is a calling full of delays and disappointments, and I can never recommend any one to pursue it. If he *must* be a painter, let him come prepared to bear up a mighty burden." He advised a young artist thus: "Do not be anxious, but put faith in your fingers. When I paint, I often do not look at my palette; I take off my colors by a secret sympathy between my hand and the pigments." Another tyro in art submitted a landscape for the master's criticism, and he remarked, "Your trees do not look as if the birds could fly through them." When some one asked him if a certain picture of his own was not his favorite, he rejoined, "I love *all* my children."

In 1839 an exhibition of forty-two of Allston's pictures was held in Harding's Gallery, in Boston; and although his larger works were not included, yet the beauty and exquisite finish of those displayed created a profound impression on all appreciative spectators. The originality and versatility of these works attested the wide range of his conceptions, as well as the individuality of his genius; and American art for the first time could display, in one group and from one master-hand, the choicest excellences of painting and design, thoroughly harmonious in their perfect finish, noble conceptions, and permanent power. The artist himself was enraptured to see once more the works of twoscore years, many of which had been out of his sight ever since they had left the studio.

Tuckerman has described this exhibition as follows: "We turned from the impressive figure of the 'Reviving Dead,' slowly renewing vitality at the touch of the prophet's bones, to the pensive beauty of 'Beatrice,' ineffably lovely and sad; the countenance of 'Rosalie' seemed kindled like that of the maiden described by Wordsworth, as if music 'born of murmuring sound had

passed into her face'; aerial in her movement, and embodied grace in her attitude and drapery, 'Miriam' sounded the timbrel; the very foot of the scribe appeared to listen to Jeremiah, — stern, venerable, and prophetic; keenly glittered the Alpine summits, and sweetly fell the moonbeams, and darkly rose the forests in the landscapes, as if glimpses of real nature, instead of their reflex, made alive the canvas; full of character and dignity were the portraits; magnificent old Jews' heads, and exquisite brows of maidens, and imposing forms of prophets, and marvellous light and shade, deep, lucent, mellow hues, — all flitted before the senses of the visitor, while each picture formed an inexhaustible object of contemplation, and became a permanently beautiful and impressive reminiscence."

Margaret Fuller wrote a long article for "The Dial," criticising the pictures in the Allston Exhibition, and reflecting severely on the historical compositions. The Dead Man was an offensive subject; the Massacre of the Innocents had no force; Jeremiah was a robust and angry Jew; Miriam was shallow-eyed and inadequate; and the Witch of Endor was attended by a stage-

ghost and a degraded king. Therefore, as Miss Fuller reasoned, Allston was not adapted to historic works, but to the exposition of Beauty, in which he showed rare subjective excellence, bland delicacy, perfect equipoise, and unconscious self-possession, with great skill in drapery and an exquisite sensibility to color. In "The Dial" for 1840 there was a long poem, contrasting the Italian landscapes of Gaspar Poussin, Domenichino, and Allston.

Mr. Spear, the historical painter, a friend of Allston's, states that about 1840 Allston told him that Correggio was the master on whose works he had modelled his style. He extolled the "mottled" manner, and explained his own custom of painting with blue, red, and yellow mingled, taking the color which he wished to be predominant as the last upon the brush, and carefully stippling over the work. He repeatedly advised Spear to "paint in the family of the *ishes*," that is, to avoid sharp and pronounced colors, and to prefer reddish to red, bluish to blue, etc.

Harding's first portrait of Allston represented him in his favorite blue coat with brass buttons and buff waistcoat. One arm is placed akimbo

with such a martial air that the friends of the sitter afterwards playfully entitled him "Colonel Allston." About the year 1845 Harding painted from memory an admirable portrait of Allston, which was purchased by Mr. Batchelder a few years later, and still remains in his mansion at Cambridge.

Sumner visited the studio in 1840, and reported that Allston had unrolled the 'Belshazzar's Feast' across one entire side-wall, but had carefully curtained it from view. It was during the year 1840 that he painted 'The Bride.'

Allston was a great friend of George Ticknor, and delighted to visit his famous library. In 1841 Mr. Ticknor wrote of a dinner at which Longfellow, Prescott, Hillard, and Allston were present with him. The artist was a frequent visitor at the mansion of Professor Norton, in Cambridge, where some of his minor pictures are still preserved.

In 1841 Wordsworth wrote from Rydal Mount to Professor Reed of Philadelphia, telling how many years ago he had been introduced to the master by "our common friend Coleridge, who had seen much of Mr. Allston when they were

both living at Rome." After Wordsworth had been apprized, by the Rev. Mr. Waterston, of the death of the artist at Cambridge, he wrote lamenting "the death of that admirable artist and amiable man, my old friend Mr. Allston."

When Lord Morpeth (the Earl of Carlisle) visited Boston, in 1841, he was introduced to Story, Channing, Longfellow, Bancroft, Ticknor, Emerson, and Prescott. Sumner also made him acquainted with Allston. At this time Greenough was urging Allston to come to Italy, and received a letter from Sumner, telling how Longfellow and himself had recently drawn out an evening's visit at the artist's until midnight. He added that Allston was then busily engaged on the 'Belshazzar's Feast,' and would allow no one to enter the studio.

In his American Notes, Dickens says that "Washington Allston, the painter (who wrote 'Monaldi'), is a fine specimen of a glorious old genius." Grattan, in his "Civilized America," calls Allston "the foremost of American painters."

Griswold says of the master, "Not long before his death I dined with him, and was astonished

when a companion intimated that it was after midnight. We had listened six or seven hours without a thought of the lapse of time. His manners were gentle and dignified. His dress was simple and old-fashioned, — a blue coat with plain bright buttons, a buff vest, and drab pantaloons. His face was thin and serious, with remarkably expressive eyes; his hair, fine, long, and silvery white, fell gracefully upon his shoulders; and his voice was soft, earnest, and musical."

Allston read his lectures on art to Professors Longfellow and Felton, during the last winter of his life, and the latter thus describes the scene: "It was a most interesting and impressive thing to hear that beloved and venerated person, after making all his peculiar arrangements, — placing his lights each in a certain position, — setting his footstool between his chair and the fire, warming his feet, — lighting his cigar, and reducing his manuscripts to order, — read on, hour after hour, those masterly expositions clothed in the richest forms of language; . . . his large, mysterious eye growing larger with the interest of his subject, his voice increasing in volume and strength, his pale countenance transfigured by his kindling soul to

an almost supernatural expression, until, as he uttered passage after passage of harmonious and magnificent discourse, he seemed to become the inspired prophet, declaring a new revelation of the religion of art. . . . Mr. Allston's conversation was singularly attractive. The Graces, seeking a shrine, certainly chose his soul for their temple. His peculiar and striking personal appearance can never be forgotten. His tall and slender figure, his pale countenance, the towering pile of his forehead, his regular and pleasing features, his large hazel eye, the venerable locks that waved in the solemn beauty of silvered age from his shapely head, formed in their combination an image which he who has once seen sees forever. His manners were mild, sincere, urbane, and warm, expressing all the blended softness, grace, and dignity of his character. His voice was the gentlest utterance that ever mortal spoke in."

Not many days before he died Allston received a visit from his old friend, the Rev. R. C. Waterston, who bore him an invitation from Weir to make a visit to the latter's residence at West Point. He expressed a strong desire to accept this pleasant courtesy, but said that he was

too busy at painting ; and added, stretching forth his arms, "My wrists are so tired every night that they absolutely *ache*."

The closing scenes of Allston's life cannot be better described than in the words of the venerable poet, Richard H. Dana, in his letter to Professor Morse: "Your old friend, and one who spoke of you with deep affection, was taken from us most suddenly, and I may say most unexpectedly ; for, though he seemed to be failing fast, his friends had no suspicion of a disease of the organs that would take him away instantly. The great arteries were not essentially impaired ; but one or two that fed the heart itself were ossified. While none of the intestinal organs could be said to be in a healthy state, none, with the exception of those I have mentioned as being ossified, were in so diseased a condition that he might not have lived some years longer. So long ago as when — took a bust of him his friends thought he would not live long, but he recruited. The winter before last he was severely ill, and we feared for him then. From that attack he but partially recovered, and from that time was plainly, with short terms of a better

state, a broken-down, failing man. His strength was not sufficient for his labor; and, while his intellect was as clear as ever, it was evident that the servant, the body, was too much weakened to do its appointed work. He spoke of himself as an old, broken-down man. It was plain, his wife says, from the dreadful depression he was under for the last ten months, when his friends were not around him, that he was suffering under the apprehension that he should not have strength to finish what he was about. God, in His mercy, spared him from living on with this thought to prey on him, and took him away in a moment, but with a touch as gentle as the breaking morning light. Both my sisters and my daughter were there, preparatory to leaving him for the summer. All but my daughter went to bed. She sat talking to him. He was strongly attached to her; and had spoken of her most affectionately, as he was wont to do, the last time I saw him. 'I like to talk to her, for she always takes my meaning at once,' he said to me. He said many kind things to her this last night. 'You are my niece,' said he. 'You are more to me, — you are my child. There are

relations nearer than those of blood.' Twice he put his arms gently round her, and the second time kissed her forehead, and then lowered his head for her to kiss his cheek. He then looked upward, and his eyes were as if he was seeing into the world of holiness and all peace, and he said, 'I want you to be perfect, perfect. . . . I do not feel like talking,' he soon added, sat down, drew a chair to him for her to sit by him, took her hand, and occasionally spoke in somewhat the same strain. Between twelve and one o'clock he complained of a pain in the chest; he had felt the same once before, about three weeks previous to this. She advised his taking something for it, not thinking of it, however, as anything of much importance; so that, when he went up to his wife's chamber to get what she recommended, she herself went off to bed. He moved about as usual, and when his wife offered to go down and prepare something, he answered, 'O, no! I can do it just as well myself.' He went down again. She stopped to get something which she thought he might want, and followed him in five minutes. She found him sitting in his usual place, with his writing apparatus, which he had

just taken out, near him, his feet on the hearth, and his head resting on the back of his chair, in just the position in which he often took his nap. She went up to him ; his eyes were open, and, from their appearance, she thought he might have fainted. They were all instantly with him. One of my sisters said to him, 'Mr. Allston, we are all here.' His eyes soon closed. A physician was called, they, in the mean time, doing all they could to revive him. There is very little doubt that life had stopped when his wife reached him. His physician says that he must have gone without a moment's pain, — that it was a mere closing.

"So beautiful an expression as was on his face, as he lay sleeping in Jesus, I never saw on the face of man. Spirits were with his spirit. And a most humble being he was before his God. In Christ and the great Atonement was his only trust. Trust, do I say? it was his realized, fervid life. Not a fortnight before his death he opened his whole soul to the clergyman here, — a most interesting man, — who told me that such child-like, undoubting faith it was delightful to sit and hear poured forth. . . . I wish you could have seen more of Allston, particularly within the last

year of his life. . . . If ever *heavenly-mindedness* showed itself in its *life* and *beauty*, it made itself visible to the mind of Allston, — humble, child-like, himself nothing, Christ all things, — love overflowed him, and the harmony of the upper world pervaded him, and harmonized for him all nature and all art. These were not separated from his religious life, because they were taken up into it and sanctified and made beautiful.”

While Clevenger was making Allston's bust the master was suffering under almost continual pain in the face, with a resulting expression of distress and rigidity of muscles. But after his decease Brackett took a cast from his face, whereof Dana said: “So beautiful was the countenance after death, so softened the muscles, and rounded and smoothed the face, that he looked as he did years back, before disease and distress of mind had so preyed upon him.” Four years later Allston's head was modelled by Paul Duggan, for a medal struck by the American Art Union.

Professor Morse, who had always sustained an almost filial relation to Allston, hastened from Washington to Cambridge to pay the last honors to his departed master. He secured as a pre-

cious memento a brush with which he was painting the day he died, still moist with the paint which he had been laying on 'The Feast of Belshazzar.' This relic was presented by Morse to the National Academy of Design, where it is still carefully preserved.

Richard H. Dana and Christopher P. Cranch wrote obituary poems on Allston. Dr. Albro, the pastor of the Shepard Congregational Society, delivered a long and appreciative sermon on his illustrious parishioner, which was afterwards printed and circulated. Albro applied to the deceased artist the words of Jeremy Taylor about the Countess of Carberry: "As if she knew nothing of it, she had a low opinion of herself; and, like a fair taper, she shined to all the room; yet round about her own station she cast a shadow and a cloud, and so shined to everybody but herself."

Many relics of Allston are preserved with pious care in Boston and Cambridge. Mr. Richard H. Dana, Jr., has his favorite chair, the last quill-pen and painting-brush which he used, the tortoise-shell tobacco-box which Collins gave him, the plate on which he mixed his colors the

day he died, and other rare mementoes. In 1863 Miss Judkins presented to the Massachusetts Historical Society his blender for mingling colors.

Allston's remains were placed in the old Dana tomb, in the churchyard opposite Harvard College, where they still remain. The tomb is subterranean, and has no mark by which it can be recognized. The funeral was an impressive ceremony, having occurred just after dark, when the white moonlight streamed on the statuesque face of the dead master, and the burial service was read by the light of lanterns. Sumner, Story, and other eminent men were present at the grave. The first interment in this venerable cemetery occurred before the year 1650, and many professors of the college and venerable scholars have been buried there. Among the solemn graves are the tombs of the Vassals, the Belchers, and other high families of the colonial era. Sumner endeavored to raise \$ 2,000 for a monument to Allston at Mount Auburn ; but the movement failed, on account of Mrs. Allston's opposition. Some memorial should be raised, however humble and plain, over the Dana tomb, in order that the pilgrim of art may find the grave of the American Titian.

CHAPTER VII.

Allston as an Author. — "The Sylphs." — "The Two Painters."
— Minor Poems. — "Monaldi." — "Lectures on Art." — Studio
Aphorisms.

IN literature Allston exemplified his wide culture by meritorious works as a poet, novelist, essayist, metaphysician, and critic. He would have made as great a success in letters as in art, if he had devoted the same energy to the pen as to the pencil.

The volume of poems published in London, and republished in Boston, proves that the Cambridge master had a high degree of inspiration in that direction ; and well-nigh takes rank with the sonnets of Michael Angelo and the satires of Salvatore Rosa. The poems are light, sprightly, and gentle, full of particularity and truth, and showing a fine appreciation of nature and a lively imagination. They do not stir the intenser passions, nor open up realms of mystery or excitement, but rest in the fair sunlight, amid the delicate

perfume of nature, placid and peaceful, and perceiving, with the eyes of the spirit of love, the beauty of the world beneath its outer incrustations of vice and hatred. Sometimes the innocent muse ascends to inspiring realms of joyous magnificence, in the dominion of the imagination, and sometimes flickering flashes of playful satire play through the else shadowy passages. Such poems as "Rosalie" and "The Tuscan Girl" illustrate his paintings in the most exquisite manner, showing the individuality of the artist and the purity of the man, and marking the unity whereby genius harmonizes all expressions to a common principle.

The first poem in the book is "The Sylphs of the Seasons," containing sixty-nine stanzas, and with minute felicity and deep introspection illustrating the effects of the scenery of the seasons on the human mind. The poet first has a vision of a desert cave, and then is carried in dream to a lofty castle, looking down on a plain adorned with scenery of every period, and with a double throne in its great hall. Four fairies, representing the seasons, are grouped there, and inform the poet that the throne is his, and he is to

choose one of them to share it with him. Each of them sings to him of her charms of person and mind, beginning with Spring, who speaks of her cheerful influences on humanity.

“ And next the Sylph of Summer fair ;
The while her crispéd, golden hair
Half veiled her sunny eyes,”

derides the chilling fogs of Spring, and bids the poet consider how her sweet languors, her rich scenery, and her visionary nights had “made the body’s indolence the vigor of the mind.”

“ And now, in accents deep and low,
Like voice of fondly cherished woe,
The Sylph of Autumn sad,”

declining to boast of her bright-hued fruits and golden harvests and rainbow forests, bids the poet consider how her falling leaves and stormy seas and lurid sunsets taught him to muse on the decay of earthly pleasures, the melancholy advance of Death, and the sublimity of the life immortal. Last comes the Sylph of Winter, with piercing voice, vaunting the majestic and heart-stirring influences of her wild tempests, when from “Old Hecla’s cloudy height thou ”

"Hast known my petrifying wind
Wild ocean's curling billows bind,
Like bending sheaves by harvest hind,
Erect in icy death."

She sings of Nature sleeping under her robes of snowy plains, enriched by sunset with countless colors ; of the exquisite beauty of her frost-work ; and the refining and ennobling memories and images, free from sensuousness, which arose in her long and solemn nights.

The poet stood "all motionless and mute," unable to choose between such multifarious and seductive charms, until the break of day, when he awoke under the light of a new sun. Some of the descriptive passages are of the most finished and exquisite beauty and delicacy, and reveal the earnest working of a most sensitive and creative imagination.

"The Two Painters" is a metric satire of six hundred and forty lines, which Dana says "in easy and narrative style reminds us of the tales of Swift, Prior, and Gay." It is in ridicule of the idea that artistic excellence in one department alone, scorning the others, can reach perfection.

"Once on a time in Charon's wherry,
Two Painters met, on Styx's ferry,"

the one a *colorist*, and the other a painter of *mind*, and wrangled so noisily that the grim boatman silenced them as "unmannered ghosts." Deep-whizzing through the wave, amid the desolate cries of low-crouching spectre-birds, the sheeted dead passed onward through the gloom, and met the social shades of many other inquisitive ghosts upon the further strand. Poets, painters, politicians, philosophers, and other whilom great ones gathered round to ask how the world still regarded their memories ; but they were hurried to the judgment-seat of Minos, who chose the spirit of Da Vinci to arbitrate their quarrel. The colorist and the designer made long addresses before the judge, each extolling himself and throwing contempt upon the other, and finally demanding that the case should be decided on the merits of their pictures. Mercury is sent to get them, but learns that they are dead and buried, and returns with a vast procession of ghostly pictures, which the assembled spirits criticise with sparkling wit. The shades of Socrates and Alexander wax angry and sarcastic at the anachronistic caricatures which had been made of them, until the judge arose in ire, and

bestowed bitter reprimands upon the two painters, bidding them consider Raphael, who united nearly all the excellences of art by wise study of his great contemporaries. He then sentenced them to be bound in one yoke, to paint together for five centuries, and then perhaps gracious Jove would send them back to earth as one artist.

"For thus the eternal Fates decree:

'One leg alone shall never run,

Nor two Half-Painters make but one.'"

"Eccentricity" is a didactic poem of four hundred and thirteen lines, portraying numerous ridiculous and affected characters such as are often met by the student of humanity, in ponderous and involved sentences which recall the profundities of Pope or Cowper. The following is the closing sentiment:—

"O task sublime, to till the human soil,
Where fruits immortal crown the laborer's toil!
Where deathless flowers, in everlasting bloom,
May gales from heaven with odorous sweets perfume,
Whose fragrance still, when man's last work is done,
And hoary Time his final course has run,
Through ages back, with freshening power shall last,
Mark his long track, and linger where he passed!"

"The Paint-King" is a weird and mock-romantic poem of thirty-eight stanzas, describing the

abduction of the fair Ellen by the Paint-King, who captivated her in the guise of a fascinating youth, with a mysterious picture of Pygmalion and Galatea. He swept her away through the air to a mountain-cave, and then appeared before her in his true aspect, with a face "like a palette of villanous dyes," sitting on a Titan's skull, and smoking a pipe twice as big as the Eddystone Lighthouse. He immersed her for seven days in a jug of oil, and then ground her up, spreading on his palette the blue of her eyes, the brown of her hair, the red of her lips, etc., to paint therewith the portrait of Geraldine the fairy. But he failed in the picture, which was to give him the fairy for a wife or to cost him his life, and Geraldine at once slew him and released Ellen from her pulverized state. As wild a fancy, surely, and as well wrought out, as any Hawthorne ever dreamed of.

Following "The Paint-King" were two poems, respectively "To a Lady, who Lamented that she had never been in Love," and "To a Lady who Spoke slightingly of Poets," — melodious stanzas, full of delicate sentiment and active fancy. Next came six sonnets, to West, Rembrandt, Tibaldi, the Luxembourg Gallery, and the magnificent

tributes to the falling group in Angelo's 'Last Judgment' and Raphael's 'Three Angels before Abraham's Tent.' The London edition closed with four simple and touching ballads.

Allston sent a volume of his poems to Lady Beaumont, and Collins, who delivered it, wrote to him: "Southey said that, whatever defects some of them might have, he had no hesitation in saying that they could not have proceeded from any but a poetic mind; in which sentiment he was most cordially supported by Wordsworth, who was present at the time."

"Monaldi" is the title of an Italian romance which Allston composed in 1821 for publication in Richard H. Dana's serial of "The Idle Man." The sudden suspension of the periodical caused the author to throw his manuscript aside; but twenty years later he sought it out and gave it to the public. The story opens with an adventure in the Abruzzi Mountains, which leads the narrator to a secluded monastery wherein he discovers a weird and mysterious painting of Satan, on a golden throne, adored by an agonized mortal. This incident is described with a graphic vigor which confirms the author's renown as a teller

of ghost-stories, and exemplifies how keenly he enjoyed the supernatural and how eagerly he received legendary and marvellous stories. These traits appear still more richly in such pictures as the Belshazzar and the Spalatro, the bandit-haunted forests, the sorceress of Endor. After its impressive beginning, the story is carried on with an easy grace and a revealing power which mark the author's masterly skill in construction, and his comprehension of the secret and terrible workings of love, jealousy, and revenge. In some parts the situations are appalling in their tragic power; but elsewhere there are bright and attractive passages on art and nature, in which the experience and reflections of the writer during his years of Roman life are vividly set forth. The heroine of the story is an ideally lovely creation, filled with spiritual life and strength, and recalling the lineaments of certain of the master's pictures. The hero is a painter, and his character is unfolded with great vigor and masterly analysis. The construction of the plot is faulty in parts, but the style is concise and simple, and often becomes eloquent and melodious. The book was translated into the German language.

Professor Felton thus criticises "Monaldi": "The style of this work is flowing, melodious, picturesque, and beautifully finished; many of its scenes are wrought up with a terrible power, more of them sparkle with all the graces of imagination and taste. There are paragraphs in that book in which the very soul of the author seems to pour itself out in strains of the richest melody; there are innumerable passages of such graphic beauty that no other hand could have traced them but his whose marvellous cunning painted for all coming time the Beatrice, Rosalie, and Amy Robsart."

Soon after 1830 Mr. Allston began the preparation of a series of lectures, which he was to have delivered before a select audience in Boston. He completed four of these lectures, and made the drafts of two others. They were edited by Richard H. Dana, Jr., and published at New York, in 1850, in a volume which also included Allston's poems. Professor Felton says that they "contain the essence of Allston's entire artistic life. . . . This is indeed a golden legacy to the art and literature of our country."

A note preliminary to the lectures carefully

defined the word *idea*, in the sense in which it should be used therein, as "the highest or most perfect *form* in which anything, whether of the physical, the intellectual, or the spiritual, may exist to the mind. There are two kinds of ideas, self-affirmed, and therefore not mere notions,—the *primary*, or manifestation of objective realities; and the *secondary*, or the reflex products of the mental constitution."

The "Introductory Discourse" opens with an exaltation of the mental pleasures, and proceeds to state and demonstrate the following proposition: "That the Pleasures in question have their true source in One Intuitive Universal Principle or living Power, and that the three Ideas of Beauty, Truth, and Holiness, which we assume to represent the *perfect* in the physical, intellectual, and moral worlds, are but the several realized phases of this sovereign principle, which we shall call *Harmony*." This is attended with a profound and philosophical analysis of the idea of Beauty, with its powers and limitations; a consideration of the imperishable pleasure of Truth, illustrated aptly in many ways; and a reverent contemplation of Goodness, and its re-

sistless ultimate power. The divine harmony in which these principles are united is then proclaimed, and the manner and efficacy of the synthesis are set forth, — the argument ascending, as it were, in a continuous spiral, and at last resting above the stars.

The second lecture demonstrates that Art is distinguished from Nature by four great characteristics, namely, Originality ; Human or Poetic Truth, the verifying principle by which the first is recognized ; Invention, or the product of the Imagination, as grounded on the first and verified by the second ; and Unity, the synthesis of all. There is a fine comparison, in the course of the argument, between Raphael and Ostade ; and the power of Poetic Truth is demonstrated by glowing allusions to Shakespeare's Caliban, Sir Joshua Reynolds's Puck, the Farnese Hercules, and the Apollo Belvedere.

The third lecture was on the Human Form, and contains the following propositions : " First, that the notion of one or more standard Forms, which shall in all cases serve as exemplars, is essentially false, and of impracticable application for any true purpose of Art ; secondly, that

the only approach to Science, which the subject admits, is in a few general rules relating to Stat-ure, and these, too, serving rather as convenient *expedients* than exact guides, inasmuch as, in most cases, they allow of indefinite variations ; and, thirdly, that the only efficient Rule must be found in the artist's mind, — in those intuitive Powers which are above, and beyond, both the senses and the understanding ; which, nevertheless, are so far from precluding knowledge, as, on the contrary, to require, as their effective condition, the widest intimacy with the things external, — without which their very existence must remain unknown to the artist himself." This thoughtful discourse closes with a brilliant comparison of Raphael and Michael Angelo, "the two great sovereigns of the two distinct empires of Truth, — the Actual and the Imaginative."

The fourth and last lecture treats of Composition in Art, which contains the following characteristics : "First, Unity of Purpose, as expressing the general sentiment or intention of the Artist. Secondly, Variety of Parts, as expressed in the diversity of shape, quantity, and line.

Thirdly, Continuity, as expressed by the connection of parts with each other, and their relation to the whole. Fourthly, Harmony of Parts." Variety is illustrated by Veronese's 'Marriage of Cana'; and the systems of lines of Claude and of Salvator Rosa are skilfully contrasted. Raphael, Tintoretto, Poussin, and Claude are considered in their early imitative idea; and Reynolds's defence of borrowing is reprehended.

The walls of Allston's studio were marked with over forty aphoristic sentences, which, as he told Mrs. Jameson, served as "texts for reflection before he began his day's work." He sometimes discussed their merits with visitors, and continually pondered them in his heart. From these articles of his artistic creed we select a half-dozen, almost at random, as expository of his character and genius.

"If an Artist love his Art for its own sake, he will delight in excellence wherever he meets it, as well in the works of another as his own. This is the test of a true love."

"The love of gain never made a Painter; but it has marred many."

"Distinction is the consequence, never the object, of a great mind."

“There is an essential meanness in the wish *to get the better* of any one. The only competition worthy of a wise man is with himself.”

“Make no man your idol, for the best man must have faults ; and his faults will insensibly become yours, in addition to your own. This is as true in Art as in morals.”

“What *light* is in the natural world, such is *fame* in the intellectual ; both requiring an *atmosphere* in order to become perceptible. Hence the fame of Michael Angelo is, to some minds, a nonentity ; even as the sun itself would be invisible *in vacuo*.”

As a word-painter Allston was almost as successful as in his own profession, and few richer pen-pictures can be found than those in which he describes the scenery of the Apennines, or a hot white summer noon in Rome, or the Alps at morning around Lake Maggiore. His conversation was no less brilliant than his writings, full of wisdom and sympathy and rich experience, and alike improving and inspiring to all who heard it. The colloquial accomplishment was not with him a lost art, and the humble home at Cambridgeport often heard marvellous discourses and remi-

niscences. The varied and picturesque experiences of an active lifetime in many lands were freely poured forth in accents of grace and vitality. One of his favorite themes was his sojourn in Rome, with the august memories of his friendship with Thorwaldsen, Coleridge, and Irving, and their rambles and discussions among the ruins and palaces of the Eternal City.

CHAPTER VIII.

**Personal Traits. — System of Color. — Versatility. — Italianism. —
Slight Influence on American Art.**

ALLSTON'S personal appearance was such as would have distinguished him among a thousand. His figure was slender, but straight and active, and his air seemed serenely abstracted, when not enlivened by conversation. His broad and spiritual forehead was bordered by long white hair, which descended upon his shoulders in waving masses. His eyes appeared large and eloquent, and were somewhat projecting. His chin was short, but not receding. The general expression of the face indicated mildness and sweetness, bordering on effeminacy, yet there was that behind it which rendered it impossible for visitors to show undue familiarity or freedom. Mr. Allston's manner was so dignified and courtly that Collins, the Royal Academician, once said: "Were any one to meet Washington Allston in the street, with a sack of coals on his shoulders, he would at once recognize him as a gentleman."

John Howard Payne, in his later years, gave to Washington Irving the following laconic description of the master: "Allston was always the gentleman. Would talk by the hour. Liked to talk. A capital teller of ghost-stories. Would act them with voice, eyes, and gesture. Had touches of gentle humor. Rather indolent. Would lie late in bed. Smoked segars. A man of real genius. A noble painter. It was a pity he came back (in 1818); he would have risen to the head of his art,—been the greatest painter of his day." Charles Sumner also said: "Allston was a good man, with a soul refined by purity, exalted by religion, softened by love. In manner he was simple, yet courtly,—quiet, though anxious to please,—kindly to all alike, the poor and lowly not less than the rich and great. As he spoke, in that voice of gentlest utterance, all were charmed to listen; and the airy-footed hours often tripped on far towards the gates of morning before his friends could break from his spell."

The delicate sensitiveness of the master was shown in many and peculiar ways. When india-rubber overshoes began to be worn, he purchased a pair, but could never put them on or

remove them except with the tongs. He disliked the touch of metallic door-knobs, and usually interposed the skirt of his coat, or a handkerchief, between his hand and the metal.

One of the singular customs of the artist's household was that in relation to a fire on the hearth, which was kept up throughout the year, so that visitors were favored with the music of a few crackling brands, even during the sufficient heats of an August evening.

Allston was one of the most graceful dancers ever seen in Massachusetts, having been distinguished for a rare suppleness and ease. The cotillion was in high favor at that time, and happy was the lady who could secure him as a partner. He would sometimes find himself dancing almost alone, the others having ceased in order to observe and admire his unrivalled grace. This accomplishment was especially noticeable after Allston's first visit to Europe, while he was still young and delighted in society.

He was fond of reading metaphysical works, and had no less pleasure in wild and supernatural romances, tinged with *diablerie*. He perused "The Five Nights of St. Alban's" with a keen zest, and exulted in the works of Mrs. Radcliffe.

Jarves enumerates Allston's faults as "inequality of execution, imperfect modelling at times, not infrequent bad taste in details, and a forcible realism of feature and *pose* in some of his greatest figures, amounting almost to awkwardness and ugliness." In 1878 George Inness said that "Allston's misfortune was that the literary had too strong hold upon his mind, creating in him ideas which were grandiose."

Allston laid in his pictures in solid crude colors, and put them by for months, while the vehicle which he used hardened the pigments to a stony surface. When the long process of drying and hardening was over, he added tenderness and richness to their solidity and strength by the skilful application of transparent glazing colors. Some of his unfinished works still remain in their state of unrelieved hardness. He also experimented to a hazardous degree, and some of his works have already lost their subtlest qualities of transparency and brilliancy.

A recent critic (Miss Sarah Clarke) thus strikes the keynote of Allston's melodious system: "The method of this artist was to suppress all the coarser beauties which make up the sub-

stance of common pictures. He was the least *ad captandum* of workers. He avoided bright eyes, curls, and contours, glaring lights, strong contrasts, and colors too crude for harmony. He reduced his beauty to her elements, so that an inner beauty might play through her features. Like the Catholic discipline which pales the face of the novice with vigils, seclusion, and fasting, and thus makes room and clears the way for the movements of the spirit, so in these figures every vulgar grace is suppressed. No classic contours, no languishing attitudes, no asking for admiration, — but a severe and chaste restraint, a modest sweetness, a slumbering intellectual atmosphere, a graceful self-possession, eyes so sincere and pure that heaven's light shines through them, and, beyond all, a hovering spiritual life that makes each form a presence."

Ware attributes no small part of Allston's success to his general cultivation of mind, which enabled him to impart the vigor and elegance of learning to his designs, and to give his characters a notable dignity. Joined to this broad culture, and illuminating it, were the noble and elevated traits of the artist's soul, earnest truth-

fulness, unselfishness, simplicity, and consecration to the highest ends of art. It was impossible for a man who thus formed a conscience of his art either to make many pictures or much money. Another foundation of his fame was that he so often painted life-size figures, which gave him a correct and elevated manner of execution and a corresponding mental inspiration. Yet these works, though rivalling the great mediæval frescos in size, were finished with the conscientious exactness and minute finish of Dutch cabinet-pictures.

He advised a young artist studying in Europe : "Do not be satisfied with being one thing. The old masters did everything. They were sculptors and architects, as well as painters. Nay, they were poets and philosophers, as Michael Angelo and Leonardo da Vinci. They painted, also, all sorts of pictures, and succeeded in all. Titian, the best portrait, was also the best landscape, painter ; at least, he was inferior only to Claude."

He could not endure the stilted allegorical compositions of the schools of West and Fuseli, and once said : "If you are going to paint a tub

or a candlestick, paint a tub or a candlestick in very truth, and not an allegory therefor."

The versatility of Allston in painting at will historical compositions, portraits, ideal heads, landscapes, marines, and *genre* pictures was accompanied with a minute and delicate finish bestowed on all alike. It was matter of wonder, when his pictures were collected in Boston, how so much work could have been crowded into one short life, and that a crippled one. The grand figures of his prophets and kings were not more carefully and minutely painted than the accessories of still-life, — the vases, jewels, and backgrounds. But this versatility was fatal to the master's pre-eminence in American art, for life is not long enough for the noblest mind and deftest hand to attain illustrious excellence in so many departments of endeavor. He should have confined himself to small ideal subjects, with which he had full sympathy.

Allston's love for sublimity was hardly less than his devotion to beauty, though it was not so often displayed in his art. Not often in Nature, affluent chiefly in beauty, did he seek sublimity, or attempt its delineation, but rather in the emo-

tions of the human mind, remorse, woe, supernatural terror. In these themes he succeeded marvellously well, insomuch that his pictures leave an abiding and haunting impression in the mind. The sharp manifestations of passionate life are veiled in an atmosphere of divine glow and profound mystery, inviting the study of the most reflective and contemplative of men, and rich in simple genuineness and magnetic charm. Through this calm repose played the rhythmic melody of delicate repetitions of color, in the manner of Paul Veronese, forming what Allston himself called an echo of colors.

In expression, or the power of portraying emotions and dispositions, Allston found another of his noble characteristics, though he withheld a display of this gift in a majority of his pictures, preferring to paint calm and passionless faces, full of tender and thoughtful beauty, and giving free scope to the imagination. Dignity is paramount, a grand abstraction, a passive majesty. In his favorite domain of ideal female heads he rarely represented faces as beautiful in the popular acceptance, but as introspective, reposeful, silent, and inanimate. If beauty can exist without

expression, it finds no more perfect exemplifications than Allston's 'Rosalie' and 'Beatrice,' — not even in Leonardo's 'Monna Lisa' nor Raphael's 'Fornarina.' This attribute of repose pervades almost all of the master's faces, and fills them with the spirit of contemplation and peace; and herein is the highest triumph of what Lord Napier of Merchiston called "the incomparable pencil of Allston."

Mr. Allston once said, "I never let a picture go out from my studio until I have finished it as well as I can"; and again (to Mrs. Jameson), "My industry should be measured, not by the pictures seen, but by those not seen." He took exception to Dunlap's declaration that he was indolent, saying, "I am famous among my acquaintances for industry: I paint every day: and never pass an hour without accomplishing something."

Every part of Allston's pictures was executed by his own hand, a fact which America has cause to mourn. Had he possessed such assistants as those of Raphael and other ancients to do the mechanical work, laying in the first colorings, and painting the unconsidered accessories, he might

have adorned his country with hundreds of his noble conceptions, finished, in all essential parts, by his own hand. Under such supervision as he could have given, scores of young artists would have flocked to his side, relieving him of his day-laborer's drudgery and imbibing his spirit of grace and beauty, and the Cambridge studio would have been the birthplace of American art.

Tuckerman, one of the leading art-critics of America, thus characterizes Allston: "With the name of this great painter, painting reached its acme of excellence among us. In genius, character, life, and feeling, he emulated the Italian masters, partook of their spirit, and caught the mellow richness of their tints. Around his revered name cluster the most select and gratifying associations of native art; in each department he exhibited a mastery. . . . From an Alpine landscape, luminous with frosty atmosphere and sky-piercing mountains, to moonbeams flickering on a quiet stream, — from grand Scriptural to delicate fairy figures, — from rugged and solemn Jewish heads to the most ideal female conceptions, — from 'Jeremiah' to 'Beatrice,' and from 'Miriam' to 'Rosalie,' every phase of mellow and

transparent,—almost magnetic color, graceful contours, deep expression, rich contrast of tints,—the mature, satisfying, versatile triumph of pictorial art, as we have known and loved it in the Old World, then and there, justified the name of American Titian, bestowed on Allston at Rome ; while the spiritual isolation and benignity, the instructive and almost inspired discourse, the lofty ideal, the religious earnestness, even the lithe frame, large, expressive eyes, and white flowing locks of Allston, his character, his life, conversation, presence, and memory, proclaimed the great artist."

Thirty-five years have passed since Allston's pencil fell from his weary hand, and American art has made noble progress. But whatever its achievements in those departments which are favored by modern taste, it has not yet surpassed—it has not equalled—the grandeur of the imaginative works of the great Carolinian. He strove for excellence, and loved it for its own sake, without thought of temporal considerations and emoluments, save as beautifully expressed in his own words: "Fame is the eternal shadow of excellence, from which it can never be separated."

Although a child of the New World and of the railway age, Allston's life and works, his face and manners, were those of another epoch, and partook of the dignity and power of the old masters of Italian art. And this was not because he had dwelt long amid the suggestive scenes of the classic lands, for his abode in Southern Europe was comparatively short in its duration, and occurred in the earlier part of his life. Powers became a dweller in Italy, yet never allowed his quaint Yankee traits to be obliterated ; nor did Cole's long residence near the Apennines force him to forget the Catskills and the White Hills. Yet here, in one of the least prepossessing of New England villages we find an antique soul developing characteristics which would have been more congenial to the Greeks of the days of Pericles or the Romans of the sixteenth Christian century.

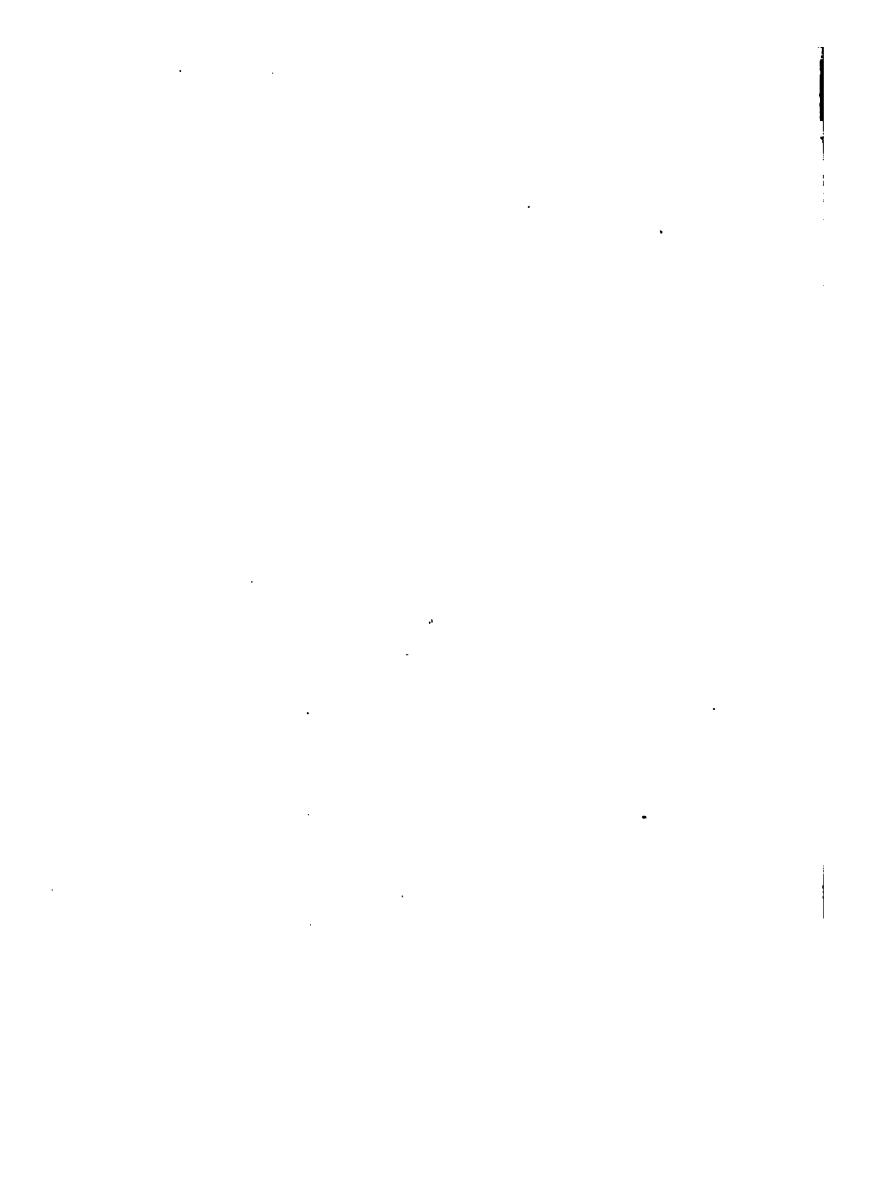
The dignity and lofty aims of true art were ever present in Allston's mind, and narrowed the compass of his achievements by increasing the conscientious demands which he made upon himself in the search after his exalted ideal. He was dissatisfied with his best works, however

glorious they certainly were, because they came short of supreme excellence ; and hence arose the frequent interruptions therein, as he laid down the pencil in hopeless humility. But although he was thus distrustful of his own abilities, his magnanimity disposed him to be an enlightened critic and a discriminating counsellor ; and many were the artists who profited by his appreciative advice and sympathy, and hailed him as Master.

Allston should have spent his life in Italy, in the very presence of the works of his great guides in art. The British school exercised no influence upon his noble style, composed, as it was, of a strong originality mingled with the motives of the Italian leaders of the sixteenth century. His return to America was an abnegation of the wealth and distinction which awaited him abroad, but served to light a section of the home-land as from a high beacon. The atmosphere and the people were uncongenial to art, but its disciple stood fast amid the practicalities of the dullest era of American life, and lifted his rush-light in the darkness. Boston was indeed proud of him, and gave him generous orders ;

but the melody of artistic inspiration had not yet thrilled through the air of the Puritan commonwealth, and Allston was bereft of adequate incitements.

And yet, when we consider the lofty genius of Allston, his rich transatlantic years, his peaceful and tranquil life, and the enthusiastic appreciation with which America received him, it is impossible to avoid a feeling that the master did not attain the best possible results. If he had devoted to his profession all the time which was wasted on dilettant diversions, and had avoided that colossal rock of offence, the 'Belshazzar's Feast,' he might have gathered about him the flower of American youth, and founded a new and noble school of Western art, prolific in illustrious works, and adding a Florentine or a Venetian elegance to the martial glories of the Republic. Herein he failed, through lack of victory-compelling effort, and left but as many pictures as could fill a large drawing-room ; while American art still remains without a head, and becomes an appanage of Paris.



A LIST OF THE CHIEF PAINTINGS OF WASHINGTON ALLSTON, WITH THE NAMES OF THEIR PRESENT OWNERS.

. *The names of the owners are in italics.*

. *Some of the pictures herein noted are unfinished; and some are highly finished studies.*

UNITED STATES.

BOSTON. — *Museum of Fine Arts*, — Portrait of Mr. Harris; Elijah in the Desert, 1817; Portrait of Allston, 1805; Pilot-boat and Storm; copy of Paul Veronese's 'Marriage at Cana,' 1803; Landscape; The Prophetess; Una; Dido; Study of Lorenzo and Jessica; Female Head; The Troubadour; The Death of King John; Cupid; Sketch of Belshazzar's Feast; Sketch of Christ Healing the Sick. (Several of these are unfinished, and pertain to the Dana family. The new wing of the Museum, erected in 1878, contains the so-called Allston Room, devoted to these pictures, and to others by the same artist, loaned by their owners and by the Athenæum.) *Boston Athenæum*, — Belshazzar's Feast; Landscape; Isaac of York; Polish Jew; The Student; The Opening of the Casket, 1802; Portrait of Benjamin West, 1814. *Mrs. George M. Barnard, Jr.*, — Landscape. *Nathan Appleton*, — Rosalie. *Mrs. George Ticknor*, — The Valentine. *Mrs. Stephen H. Bullard*, — Beatrice. *Richard Sullivan*, — A Lady. *Miss E. Jackson*, — Lorenzo and Jessica. *William Gray*, — The Sisters. *John A. Lowell*, — Amy Robsart. *Dr. Thomas Dwight*, — A Polish Jew. *H. W. Foote*, — Italian Landscape. *Miss Pratt*, — Land-

scape. *Mrs. John Codman*, — Pilot-boat in a Storm. *Frederick R. Sears*, — Tuscan Girl; Miriam. *Mrs. George R. Baldwin*, — Polyphemus. *Richard H. Dana, Jr.*, — Ideal female figure. *Richard H. Dana*, — Sketch for Belshazzar's Feast, 1817; Sketch for Christ Healing the Sick, 1817; Portrait of S. T. Coleridge (unfinished), 1805; Portrait of Allston (unfinished), 1805; Landscape; Head of Jeremiah; Titania's Court. *Mrs. S. Hooper*, — The Evening Hymn; Swiss Landscape. *Mrs. Paine*, — The Young Troubadour. *Dr. Bigelow*, — Landscape. *Mrs. Benjamin Greene*, — Head of a Jew. *Rev. J. F. W. Ware*, — A Child's Portrait. *W. H. Gardiner*, — The Witch of Endor.

MILTON. — *Mrs. M. E. Eustis*, — Mrs. Allston; William Ellery Channing. DORCHESTER. — *Mrs. Robert C. Hooper*, — Italian Shepherd Boy. BROOKLINE. — *Ignatius Sargent*, — Poor Author and Rich Publisher. *Mrs. W. C. Cabot*, — Landscape. *Mrs. J. E. Cabot*, — Roman Lady. *Mrs. Judge Wells* (Longwood), — The Indian Summer. *James M. Codman*, — Landscape. CAMBRIDGE. — *Prof. C. E. Norton*, — David Playing the Harp before Saul, 1805; The Romans and the Serpent of Epidaurus, 1805. *Mrs. Gurney*, — The Mother and Child, 1814. *Allston Heirs*, — Jason (an immense unfinished work). MEDFORD. — *E. T. Hastings*, — Una (unfinished). WORCESTER. — *Massachusetts Insane Asylum*, — The Angel Delivering St. Peter from Prison, 1812.

NEW HAVEN. — *Yale College Art-Gallery*, — Jeremiah. PROVIDENCE. — *W. F. Channing*, — Portrait of Francis Channing. NEWPORT. — *Redwood Library*, — Portrait of

Robert Rogers. WASHINGTON, D. C. — *George Bancroft*, — Head of St. Peter. PHILADELPHIA, PA. — *Academy of Fine Arts*, — The Dead Man Revived by Elisha's Bones. *Mrs. General Barstow*, — Bandits (Donna Mencía?). NEW YORK CITY. — *George Sherman*, — A Landscape. *William J. Flagg*, — Moonlight Landscape. FISHKILL-ON-HUDSON. — *Mrs. Headley*, — Portrait of Mrs. William Channing. SCHENECTADY. — *Rev. Dr. Robert Lowell*, — Landscape. CHARLESTON, S. C. — *Misses Allston*, — A Landscape; Portrait of Allston's Mother.

ENGLAND.

LONDON. — *British National Portrait Gallery*, — Portrait of Mr. S. T. Coleridge. *British Museum*, — Several sketches. *Stafford House*, — The Angel Uriel Standing in the Sun. PETWORTH. — Jacob's Dream; Contemplation; The Repose in Egypt; two cabinet pictures. CAMBRIDGE. — *Jesus College*, — Portrait of Coleridge.

MISSING.

Nine pictures painted before going abroad. — Portrait of Mr. King; Cardinal Bentivoglio (copy); young Mr. Waterhouse; W. E. Channing; three other Channing portraits; Head of Judas Iscariot; St. Peter.

Twenty-six pictures painted in Europe. — French Soldier; Rocky Coast; Landscape with Horsemen; The Poet's Ordinary; Landscape; Cupid and Psyche; Diana; Dr. King; Robert Southey; three ideal pictures at Bristol; Mrs. King; Rebecca at the Well; Morning in Italy; Donna Mencía; Clytie; Hermia and Helena; Falstaff; Samuel Williams; Mediterranean Coast.

Pictures painted after 1818. — Florimel ; The Massacre of the Innocents ; Gabriel Setting the Guard of the Heavenly Host ; The Spanish Girl ; Edwin ; Falstaff.

Several others have been destroyed by fire, and others disappeared during the great Civil War.

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